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# **WATER SUPPLY OUTLOOK FOR MONTANA**



**U. S. DEPARTMENT of AGRICULTURE ★ SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE**

Collaborating with

**MONTANA AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION**

**SNOW PILLOW RECORDS  
1974 WATER YEAR**

Data included in this report were obtained by the agencies named above in cooperation with Federal, State and private organizations listed inside the back cover of this report.



## TO RECIPIENTS OF WATER SUPPLY OUTLOOK REPORTS:

Most of the usable water in western states originates as mountain snowfall. This snowfall accumulates during the winter and spring, several months before the snow melts and appears as streamflow. Since the runoff from precipitation as snow is delayed, estimates of snowmelt runoff can be made well in advance of its occurrence. Streamflow forecasts published in this report are based principally on measurement of the water equivalent of the mountain snowpack.

Forecasts become more accurate as more of the data affecting runoff are measured. All forecasts assume that climatic factors during the remainder of the snow accumulation and melt season will interact with a resultant average effect on runoff. Early season forecasts are therefore subject to a greater change than those made on later dates.

The snow course measurement is obtained by sampling snow depth and water equivalent at surveyed and marked locations in mountain areas. A total of about ten samples are taken at each location. The average of these are reported as snow depth and water equivalent. These measurements are repeated in the same location near the same dates each year.

Snow surveys are made monthly or semi-monthly from January 1 through June 1 in most states. There are about 1900 snow courses in Western United States and in the Columbia Basin in British Columbia. Networks of automatic snow water equivalent and related data sensing devices, along with radio telemetry are expanding and will provide a continuous record of snow water and other parameters at key locations.

Detailed data on snow course and soil moisture measurements are presented in state and local reports. Other data on reservoir storage, summaries of precipitation, current streamflow, and soil moisture conditions at valley elevations are also included. The report for Western United States presents a broad picture of water supply outlook conditions, including selected streamflow forecasts, summary of snow accumulation to date, and storage in larger reservoirs.

Snow survey and soil moisture data for the period of record are published by the Soil Conservation Service by states about every five years. Data for the current year is summarized in a West-wide basic data summary and published about October 1 of each year.

*Cover Photo: Snow Surveyors near Ship Creek,  
Alaska snow course.*

S. S. PHOTO A-272-11

## PUBLISHED BY SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

The Soil Conservation Service publishes reports following the principal snow survey dates from January 1 through June 1 in cooperation with state water administrators, agricultural experiment stations and others. Copies of the reports for Western United States and all state reports may be obtained from Soil Conservation Service, Western Regional Technical Service Center, Room 209, 511 N. W. Broadway, Portland, Oregon 97209.

Copies of state and local reports may also be obtained from state offices of the Soil Conservation Service in the following states:

STATE	ADDRESS
Alaska	204 E. 5th. Ave., Room 217, Anchorage, Alaska 99501
Arizona	6029 Federal Building, Phoenix, Arizona 85025
Colorado (N. Mex.)	P. O. Box 17107, Denver, Colorado 80217
Idaho	Room 345, 304 N. 8th. St., Boise, Idaho 83702
Montana	P. O. Box 98, Bozeman, Montana 59715
Nevada	P. O. Box 4850, Reno Nevada 89505
Oregon	1218 S. W. Washington St., Portland, Oregon 97205
Utah	4012 Federal Bldg., 125 South State St., Salt Lake City, Utah 84138
Washington	360 U.S. Court House, Spokane, Washington 99201
Wyoming	P. O. Box 2440, Casper, Wyoming 82601

## PUBLISHED BY OTHER AGENCIES

Water Supply Outlook reports prepared by other agencies include a report for California by the Water Supply Forecast and Snow Surveys Unit, California Department of Water Resources, P. O. Box 388, Sacramento, California 95802 --- and for British Columbia by the Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources, Water Resources Service, Parliament Building, Victoria, British Columbia



# **WATER SUPPLY OUTLOOK FOR MONTANA**

and  
FEDERAL - STATE - PRIVATE COOPERATIVE SNOW SURVEYS

*Issued by*

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MONTANA FALL SUMMARY  
October 1, 1974

\* \* \* \* \*  
\*  
\* Most areas received above average runoff \*  
\* this past season. Cool spring weather \*  
\* delayed melt and caused large snowmelt \*  
\* peak flows in southwest and western \*  
\* Montana. Precipitation was variable over \*  
\* the state during the main growing season. \*  
\* The water supply this season was generally \*  
\* adequate for all needs, a significant and \*  
\* welcome reversal from the previous year's \*  
\* drought conditions. \*  
\*  
\* \* \* \* \*

COLUMBIA RIVER DRAINAGE

The seasons snow accumulation started on soils with near average moisture content, near average snowpack in upper Clark Fork drainage, and above average pack elsewhere. Unseasonal rains and warm temperatures in January caused major flooding in northwest Montana. Low elevation snowpack was depleted, high elevations had significant increases. Most areas had near record snowpack at the time of maximum accumulation. The exception was the upper Clark Fork drainage. Cool spring delayed almost all melt until nearly mid-June. Heavier than usual late season snowpack was present at lower elevations. Large areas of snow began melting with coming of warm weather and many areas experienced high peak streamflow with only minimal contribution from rainfall. The delayed melt and heavy snowpack combined to provide good late season water supplies in areas with high elevation headwaters. Storage in irrigation reservoirs is generally below average but greater than last year.



Current moisture in headwater soils is variable but generally near to a little below average with better moisture conditions in the northern areas.

#### MISSOURI RIVER DRAINAGE

Weather conditions appear to have been more erratic than usual. Warm spells occurred during normally cool periods, cold weather persisted into June followed by quite long periods of hot weather. Normally wet June was relatively dry. Streamflow was almost as variable with areas having good snowpack and high elevation headwaters producing good streamflow. The Gallatin River had one of the largest peak flow of record. Deficient runoff was observed in the Red Rock area as the result of low spring rainfall and heavy irrigation demands once warm weather began.

In general, near average streamflow occurred in Northern areas increasing to above average in most southwest drainages except the Red Rock.

Currently mountain soils are drier than usual as the result of a long pleasant Indian summer and lack of fall rains.

#### YELLOWSTONE RIVER DRAINAGE

The Yellowstone headwaters had above average snowpack and below average soil moisture at the beginning of the season. Snowfall decreased and temperatures increased in mid-season with increased snowfall near maximum snow accumulation period. The snow season ended with above average snowpack. The cool spring combined with the large remaining low and mid-elevation snowpack caused large peak flows when weather warmed. Streamflow held up well through the irrigation season

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with many high elevations still having remnant snowbanks that will not melt this season.

Mountain soils are generally drier than usual in medium and lower elevations.

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## SOIL MOISTURE

JULY 1, 1974

DRAINAGE BASIN and/or STATION		Profile (Inches)		Date of Survey	Soil Moisture (Inches)		
Name	Elevation	Depth	Capacity		This Year	Last Year	Average †

COLUMBIA RIVER BASINKootenai

Baree Trail	3800	48	7.5	6/28	5.0	-	5.4
Murphy Lake R. S.	3000	48	22.6	7/1	19.4	19.1	20.1
Raven	3050	48	23.0	6/28	14.0	-	18.0

Flathead

Desert Mountain	5600	54	8.4	7/1	8.2	8.2	8.5
Marias Pass	5250	54	6.5	6/30	5.6	5.4	5.4

Clark Fork

Black Pine	7100	48	10.0	7/1	8.9	9.0	8.9
Lubrecht Forest	4100	48	26.8	7/4	14.0	-	-
Seeley Lake R. S.	4030	48	11.9	7/3	10.1	4.4	7.7
Skalkaho Summit	7260	48	10.8	7/1	10.0	10.5	10.2

Bitterroot

Gibbons Pass	7100	48	7.1	7/5	5.8	6.0	6.4
Lolo Pass	5250	48	10.6	6/28	10.0	7.0	9.4

MISSOURI RIVER BASINBeaverhead

Lakeview	6700	48	15.3	6/28	9.1	16.8	14.0
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Madison

West Yellowstone	6700	48	6.5	7/4	2.6	3.0	3.0
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Gallatin

Bridger Bowl	7250	48	17.0	6/26	15.0	15.6	16.1
College Site No. 2	4856	54	17.7	6/28	11.1	17.3	13.4
Lick Creek	6860	48	18.8	6/28	16.2	-	17.9
Twenty-One Mile	7150	48	10.0	7/4	8.3	8.4	8.7

Missouri Main Stem

Kings Hill	7420	48	11.8	6/26	11.6	10.3	10.7
Stemple Pass	6350	48	5.9	7/3	4.3	-	5.1

Milk

Beaver Creek	3950	48	20.9	6/26	11.8	16.3	12.0
Rocky Boy	4700	36	10.1	6/26	8.8	9.4	9.0

Yellowstone

Battle Ridge	6020	48	17.6	6/26	12.1	12.8	14.8
Northeast Entrance	7350	48	9.4	6/29	7.1	8.0	8.9
PMC Dryland	3700	48	20.7	7/1	7.3	8.9	-





## SOIL MOISTURE

AUGUST 1, 1974

DRAINAGE BASIN and/or STATION		Profile (Inches)		Date of Survey	Soil Moisture (Inches)		
Name	Elevation	Depth	Capacity		This Year	Last Year	Average †

COLUMBIA RIVER BASINKootenai

Baree Trail	3800	48	7.5	8/5	2.7	2.7	3.8
Murphy Lake R. S.	3000	48	22.6	8/1	18.9	18.5	18.9
Raven	3050	48	23.0	8/5	13.5	13.2	16.6

Flathead

Desert Mountain	5600	54	8.4	7/30	6.4	5.7	6.4
Marias Pass	5250	54	6.5	7/29	4.0	4.0	4.2

Clark Fork

Black Pine	7100	48	10.0	8/1	8.1	8.1	8.5
Lubrecht Forest	4100	48	26.8	-	12.7	-	-
Seeley Lake R. S.	4030	48	11.9	8/6	6.6	3.8	6.8
Skalkaho Summit	7260	48	10.8	8/1	10.4	10.4	10.4

Bitterroot

Gibbons Pass	7100	48	7.1	8/1	3.8	3.4	4.9
Lolo Pass	5250	48	10.6	7/29	6.2	3.5	5.8

MISSOURI RIVER BASINBeaverhead

Lakeview	6700	48	15.3	7/31	14.5	14.1	10.0
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Madison

West Yellowstone	6700	48	6.5	7/30	1.4	2.4	2.2
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Gallatin

Bridger Bowl	7250	48	17.0	7/19	14.9	15.2	15.6
College Site No. 2	4856	54	17.7	8/2	8.4	10.9	10.2
Lick Creek	6860	48	18.8	8/7	13.3	12.5	14.9
Twenty-One Mile	7150	48	10.0	7/30	4.4	5.2	5.5

Missouri Main Stem

Kings Hill	7420	48	11.8	8/1	9.2	9.5	9.2
Stemple Pass	6350	48	5.9	8/1	3.5	3.2	4.0

Milk

Beaver Creek	3950	48	20.9	7/31	7.6	7.5	8.3
Rocky Boy	4700	36	10.1	7/31	6.8	6.3	7.5

Yellowstone

Battle Ridge	6020	48	17.6	7/19	10.6	8.0	11.1
Northeast Entrance	7350	48	9.4	7/26	5.2	5.6	6.6
PMC Dryland	3700	48	20.7	7/29	4.9	7.0	-

### Experiment No. \_\_\_\_\_

1.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

### Result / Conclusion

1.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

## SOIL MOISTURE

SEPTEMBER 1, 1974

DRAINAGE BASIN and/or STATION		Profile (Inches)		Date of Survey	Soil Moisture (Inches)		
Name	Elevation	Depth	Capacity		This Year	Last Year	Average †

COLUMBIA RIVER BASINKootenai

Baree Trail	3800	48	7.5	8/30	2.4	2.6	4.2
Murphy Lake R. S.	3000	48	22.6	8/31	18.7	18.6	18.8
Raven	3050	48	23.0	8/30	13.5	13.2	15.6

Flathead

Desert Mountain	5600	54	8.4	9/5	4.9	4.9	5.2
Marias Pass	5250	54	6.5	9/5	3.5	3.1	3.6

Clark Fork

Black Pine	7100	48	10.0	8/29	8.3	7.1	8.0
Lubrecht Forest	4100	48	26.8	9/5	13.4	12.6	-
Seeley Lake R. S.	4030	48	11.9	9/3	4.2	3.8	4.1
Skalkaho Summit	7260	48	10.8	8/29	10.3	9.0	9.8

Bitterroot

Gibbons Pass	7100	48	7.1	9/6	4.3	2.6	3.8
Lolo Pass	5250	48	10.6	8/28	4.4	2.2	4.1

MISSOURI RIVER BASINBeaverhead

Lakeview	6700	48	15.3	8/31	8.7	12.9	8.8
----------	------	----	------	------	-----	------	-----

Madison

West Yellowstone	6700	48	6.5	9/3	1.5	1.8	1.9
------------------	------	----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Gallatin

Bridger Bowl	7250	48	17.0	8/28	15.0	15.3	16.0
College Site No. 2	4856	54	17.7	8/30	17.2	9.4	9.1
Lick Creek	6860	48	18.8	8/27	12.2	11.4	15.2
Twenty-One Mile	7150	48	10.0	9/3	2.8	3.4	3.8

Missouri Main Stem

Kings Hill	7420	48	11.8	8/29	9.4	6.6	7.7
Stemple Pass	6350	48	5.9	8/30	3.8	3.0	3.7

Milk

Beaver Creek	3950	48	20.9	8/29	11.1	7.3	6.6
Rocky Boy	4700	36	10.1	8/29	9.5	6.0	6.4

Yellowstone

Battle Ridge	6020	48	17.6	8/28	8.9	8.2	9.3
Northeast Entrance	7350	48	9.4	8/31	3.8	4.2	5.7
PMC Dryland	3700	48	20.7	9/2	5.3	6.3	-

Table 1

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## SOIL MOISTURE

OCTOBER 1, 1974

DRAINAGE BASIN and/or STATION		Profile (Inches)		Date of Survey	Soil Moisture (Inches)		
Name	Elevation	Depth	Capacity		This Year	Last Year	Average †

COLUMBIA RIVER BASINKootenai

Baree Trail	3800	48	7.5	-	-	4.9	5.1
Murphy Lake R. S.	3000	48	22.6	-	-	18.4	18.5
Raven	3050	48	23.0	-	-	13.3	16.6

Flathead

Desert Mountain	5600	54	8.4	-	-	5.7	5.8
Marias Pass	5250	54	6.5	9/29	3.2	3.1	3.9

Clark Fork

Black Pine	7100	48	10.0	9/30	7.8	8.3	8.0
Lubrecht Forest	4100	48	26.8	-	-	-	-
Seeley Lake R. S.	4030	48	11.9	10/2	4.0	3.8	4.2
Skalkaho Summit	7260	48	10.8	10/1	9.5	10.2	10.2

Bitterroot

Gibbons Pass	7100	48	7.1	9/30	3.1	4.0	4.3
Lolo Pass	5250	48	10.6	9/27	3.2	3.1	4.5

MISSOURI RIVER BASINBeaverhead

Lakeview	6700	48	15.3	9/30	6.4	14.0	8.1
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Madison

West Yellowstone	6700	48	6.5	9/28	1.3	2.5	2.6
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Gallatin

Bridger Bowl	7250	48	17.0	9/24	15.0	15.3	15.7
College Site No. 2	4856	54	17.7	9/27	12.5	11.7	10.1
Lick Creek	6860	48	18.8	9/25	12.0	12.5	15.7
Twenty-One Mile	7150	48	10.0	9/28	2.2	6.2	4.7

Missouri Main Stem

Kings Hill	7420	48	11.8	9/30	9.2	8.2	7.4
Stemple Pass	6350	48	5.9	9/30	3.2	4.0	3.8

Milk

Beaver Creek	3950	48	20.9	9/26	8.8	7.1	6.7
Rocky Boy	4700	36	10.1	9/26	8.8	6.2	6.7

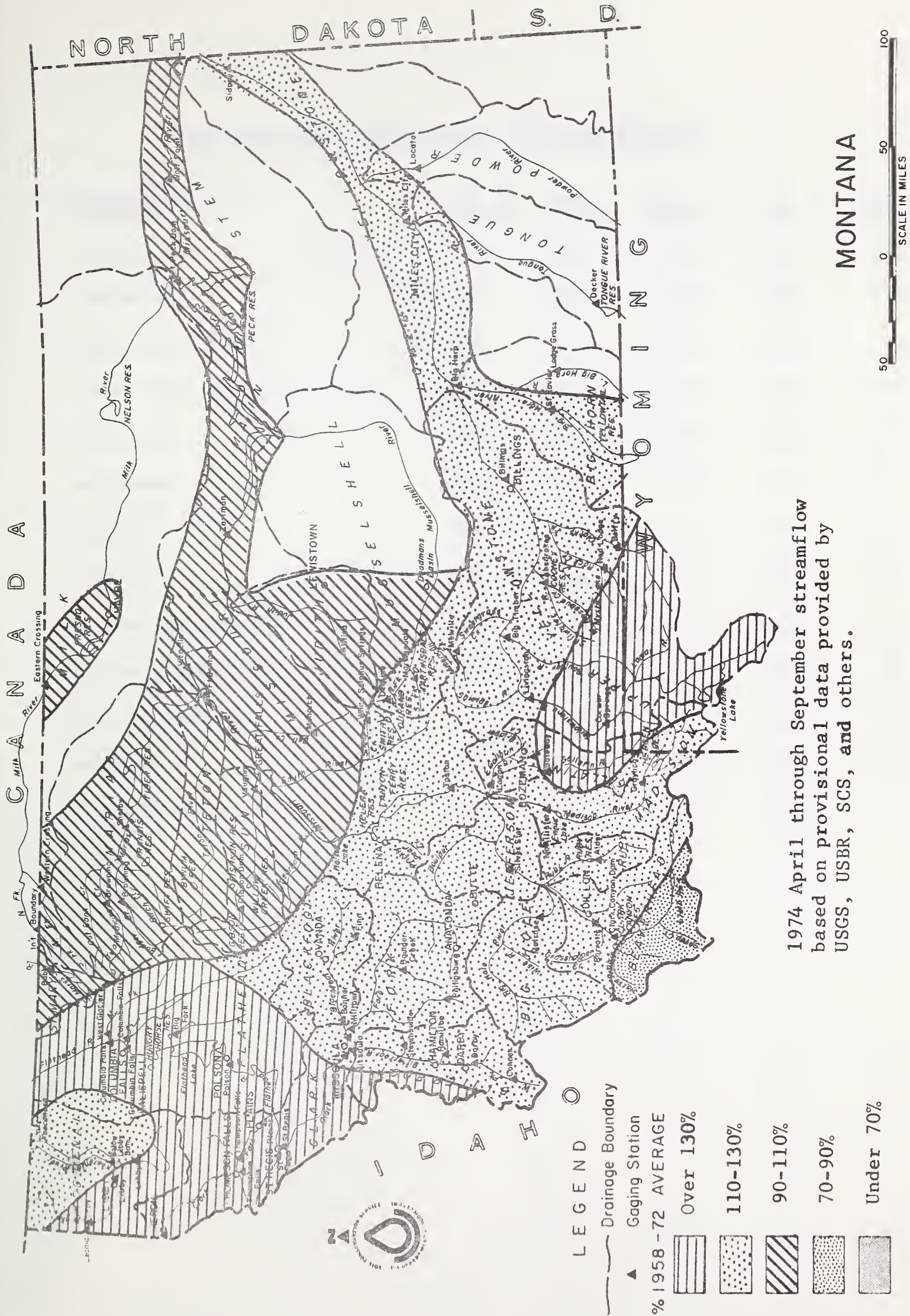
Yellowstone

Battle Ridge	6020	48	17.6	9/24	7.9	7.9	9.9
Northeast Entrance	7350	48	9.4	10/1	3.6	5.8	6.7
PMC Dryland	3700	48	20.7	9/30	5.3	6.8	-

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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1974 April through September streamflow based on provisional data provided by USGS, USBR, SCS, and others.





1974 SNOW COVER COMPARISONS - PERCENT AVERAGE

<u>DRAINAGE</u>	<u>JAN. 1</u>	<u>FEB. 1</u>	<u>MAR. 1</u>	<u>APR. 1</u>	<u>MAY 1</u>
Kootenai	-	117	131	139	145
Flathead	134	117	129	127	135
Upper Clark Fork	104	110	108	115	96
Lower Clark Fork	132	118	134	136	135
Bitterroot	133	120	130	136	133
Jefferson	106	102	113	131	117
Madison	124	118	109	139	122
Gallatin	110	96	87	117	117
Sun-Marias-Teton	100	88	111	115	98
Missouri Main Stem	97	100	109	114	98
Milk Headwaters	-	88	108	109	99
Yellowstone	114	107	100	120	116
Little Bighorn	-	60	86	76	91



# RESERVOIR STORAGE (Thousand Acre Feet) END OF MONTH

Basin or Stream	RESERVOIR	Usable Capacity	Usable Storage		
			This Year	Last Year	Average

## COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN

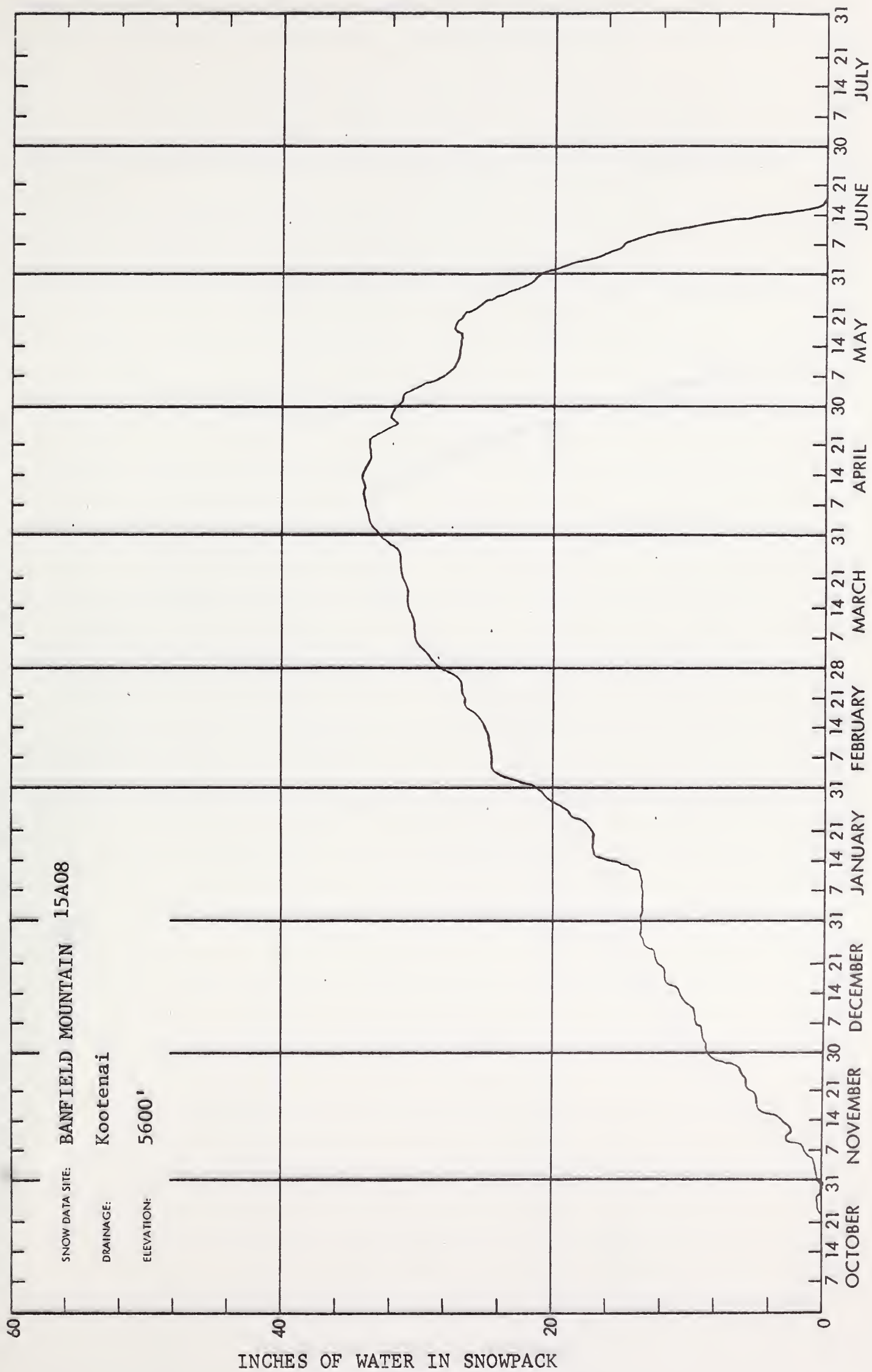
Kootenai	Koocanusa	4,965.0	5,420.0	2,781.0	-
Flathead	Hungry Horse	3,428.0	3,215.0	2,771.0	3,293.0
	Flathead Lake	1,791.0	1,762.0	1,734.0	1,738.0
	Camas (4)	45.2	16.9	9.8	21.4
	Mission Valley (8)	100.3	29.8	9.4	22.7
Clark Fork	Georgetown Lake	31.0	25.8	20.6	28.4
	Lower Willow Creek	4.6	0.3	0.0	1.2
	Nevada Creek	12.6	-	-	4.8
	Noxon Rapids	334.6	316.5	330.6	323.7
Bitterroot	Como	34.9	-	0.7	1.7
	Painted Rocks	31.7	14.3	2.2	26.5

## MISSOURI RIVER BASIN

Beaverhead	Clark Canyon	328.9	62.0	91.9	125.6
	Lima	84.0	28.4	39.0	27.1
Ruby	Ruby	38.8	-	-	10.8
Madison	Hebgen Lake	377.5	341.2	325.7	315.9
	Ennis Lake	41.0	38.2	39.3	36.4
Gallatin	Middle Creek	8.0	4.7	2.8	2.9
Missouri	Canyon Ferry	2,043.0	1,667.0	1,769.0	1,742.0
	Hauser & Helena	61.9	46.1	61.9	58.7
	Lake Helena	10.4	10.2	10.4	10.3
	Holter Lake	81.9	78.9	81.6	75.4
	Smith River	10.7	0.9	0.2	4.8
	Bair	7.0	5.4	0.0	3.0
	Martinsdale	23.1	14.3	0.6	7.8
	Deadman's Basin	72.2	37.3	20.1	32.5
	Fort Peck Lake	19,410.0	17,160.0	15,920.0	14,550.0
Sun	Gibson	105.0	45.1	3.0	31.0
	Willow Creek	32.3	24.2	10.3	17.7
	Pishkun	32.0	17.8	3.9	16.4
Marias	Lower Two Medicine	16.6	8.6	0.7	-
	Four Horns	19.2	14.1	8.6	-
	Swift	30.0	10.6	4.4	13.9
	Lake Frances	112.0	22.3	33.2	78.9
	Tiber	1,347.0	531.7	520.0	642.3
Milk	Fresno	127.2	104.6	15.6	66.2
	Nelson	66.8	57.6	22.9	43.4
	Lake Sherburne	66.1	7.9	8.4	6.4
Yellowstone	Mystic Lake	20.8	15.7	19.0	20.1
	Tongue River	68.0	-	-	24.1
	Cooney	27.5	17.0	17.0	12.2
Bighorn	Bighorn Lake	1,356.0	1,056.0	1,072.0	977.9



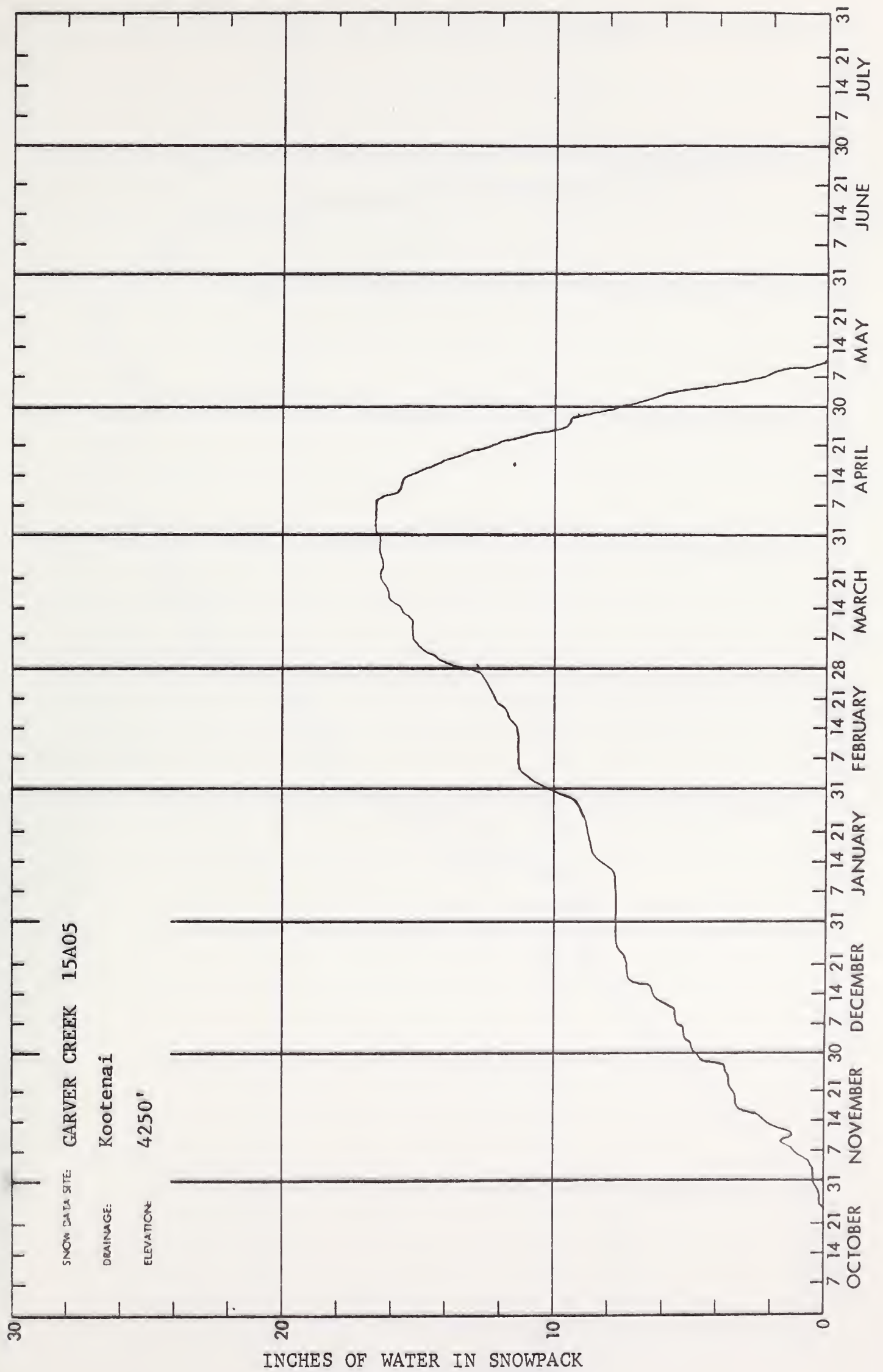




INCHES OF WATER IN SNOWPACK

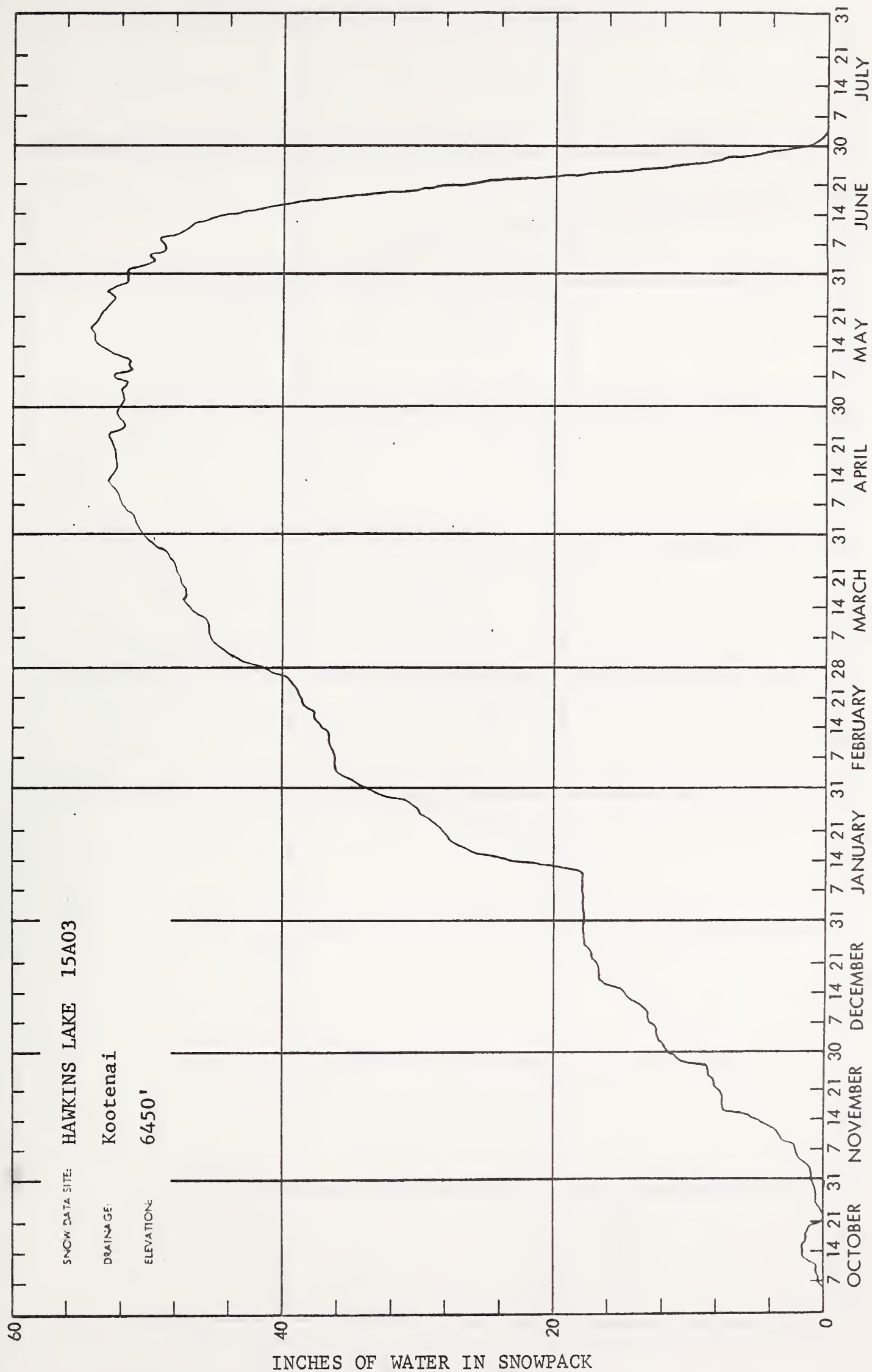


Graph of  $y = \frac{1}{x}$



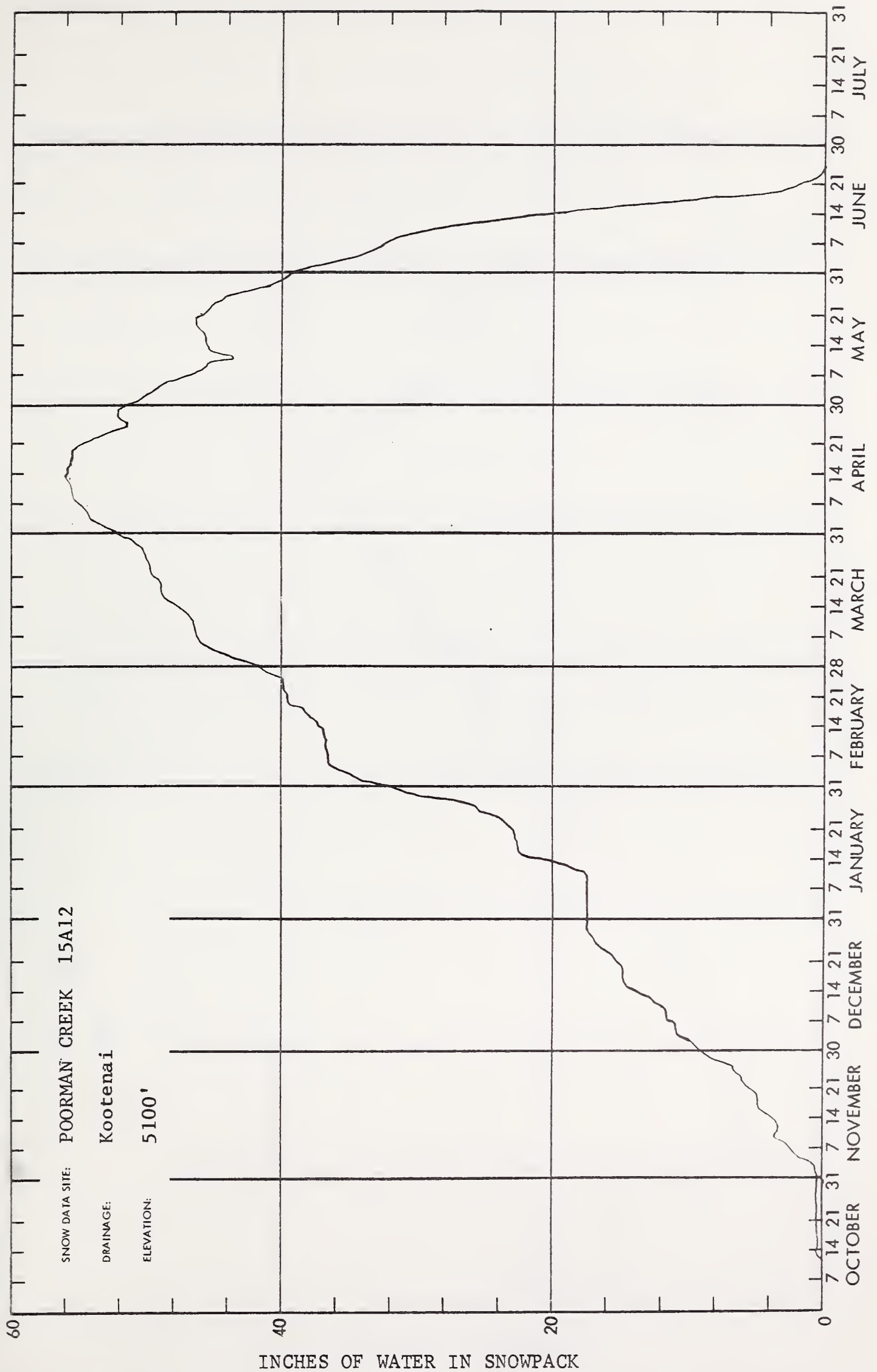






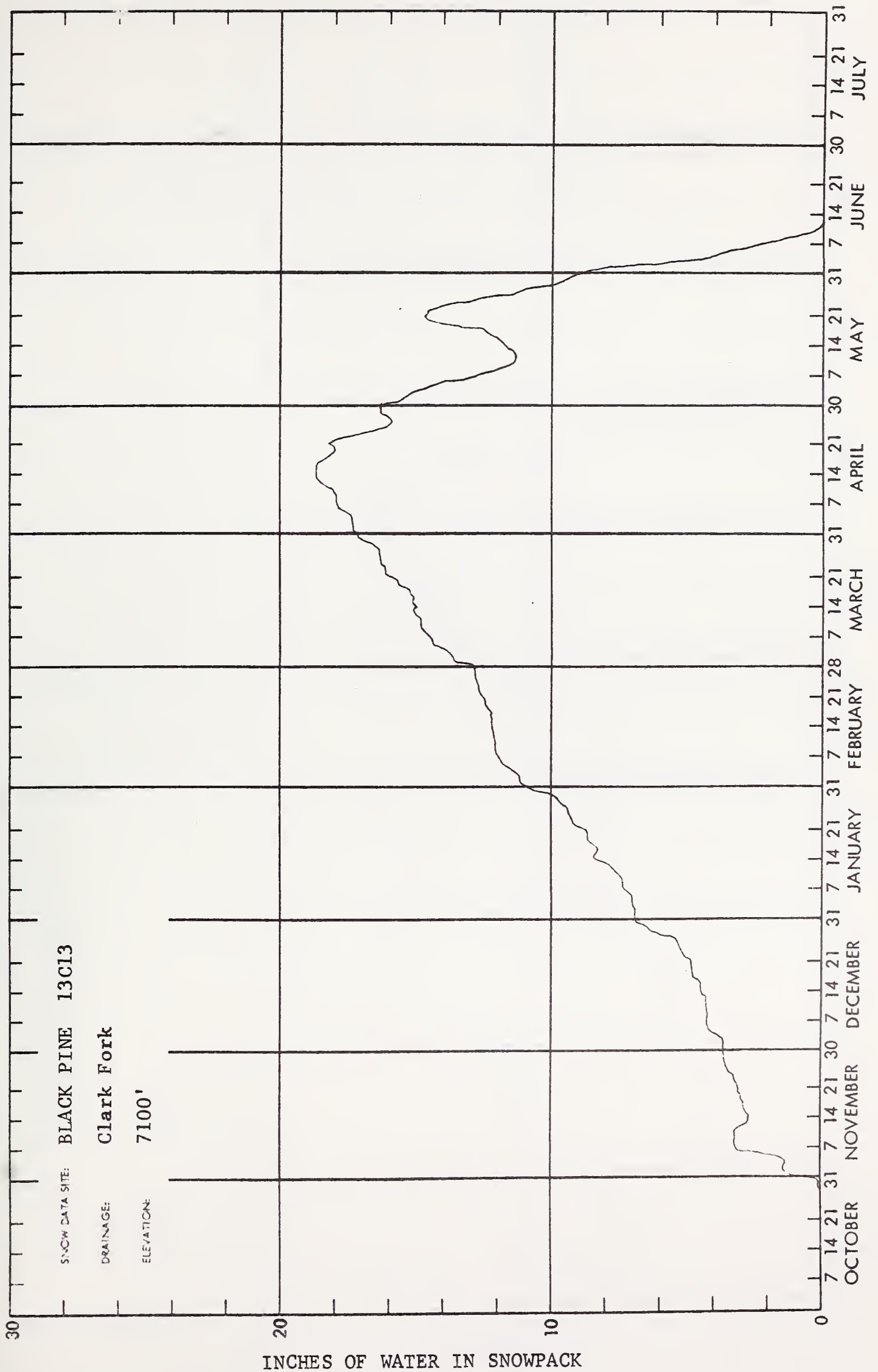
INCHES OF WATER IN SNOWPACK





INCHES OF WATER IN SNOWPACK

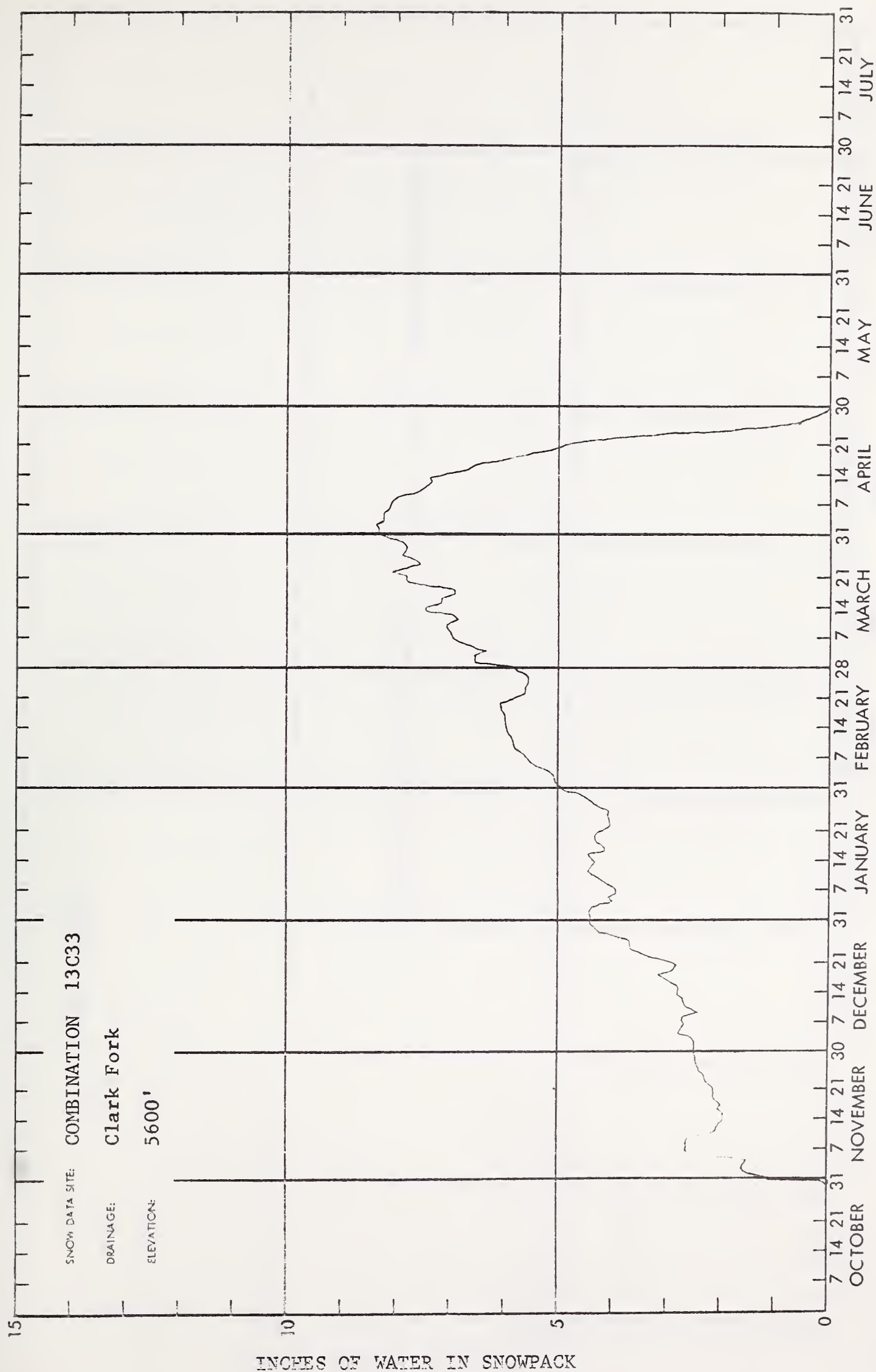






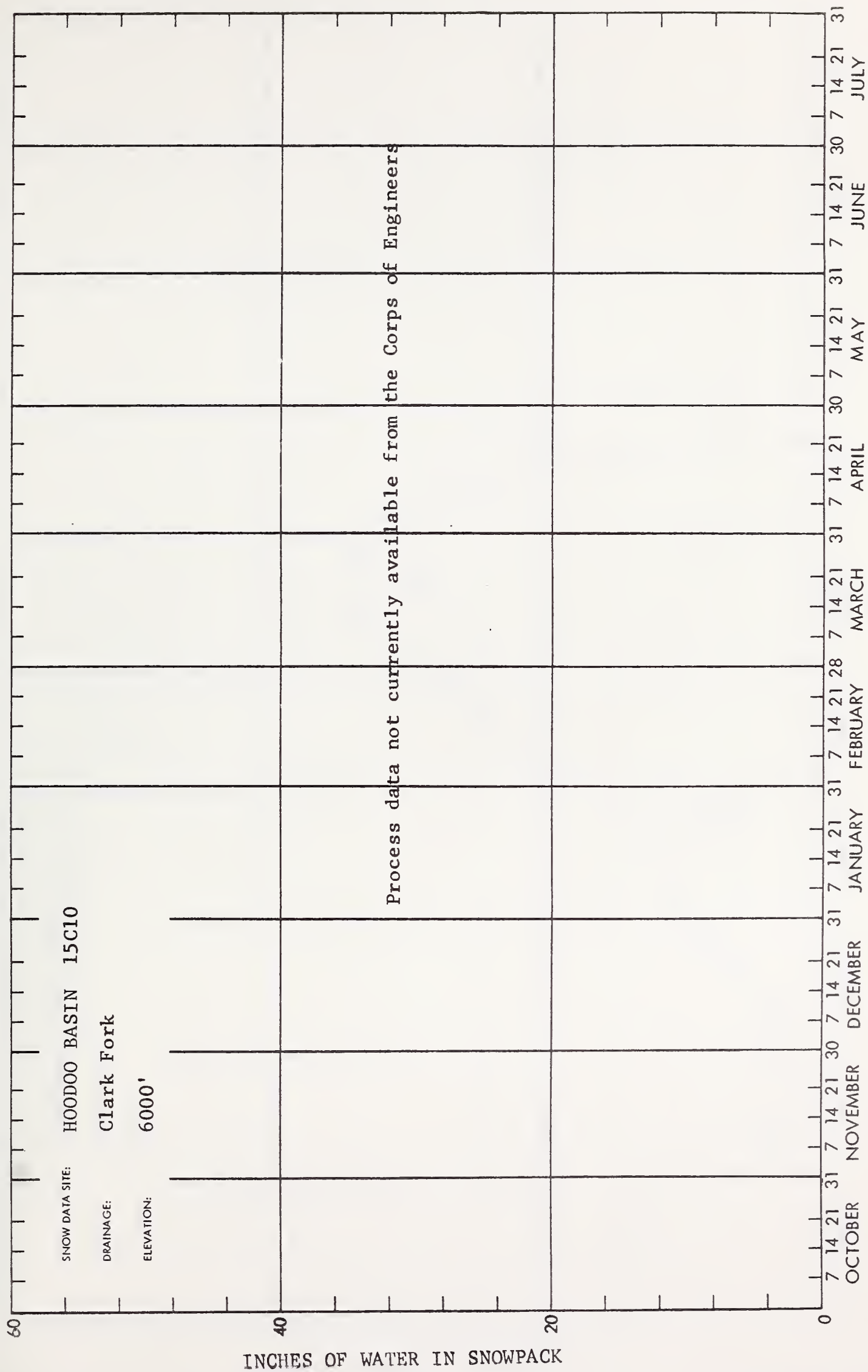


Graph of  $y = \ln(x)$



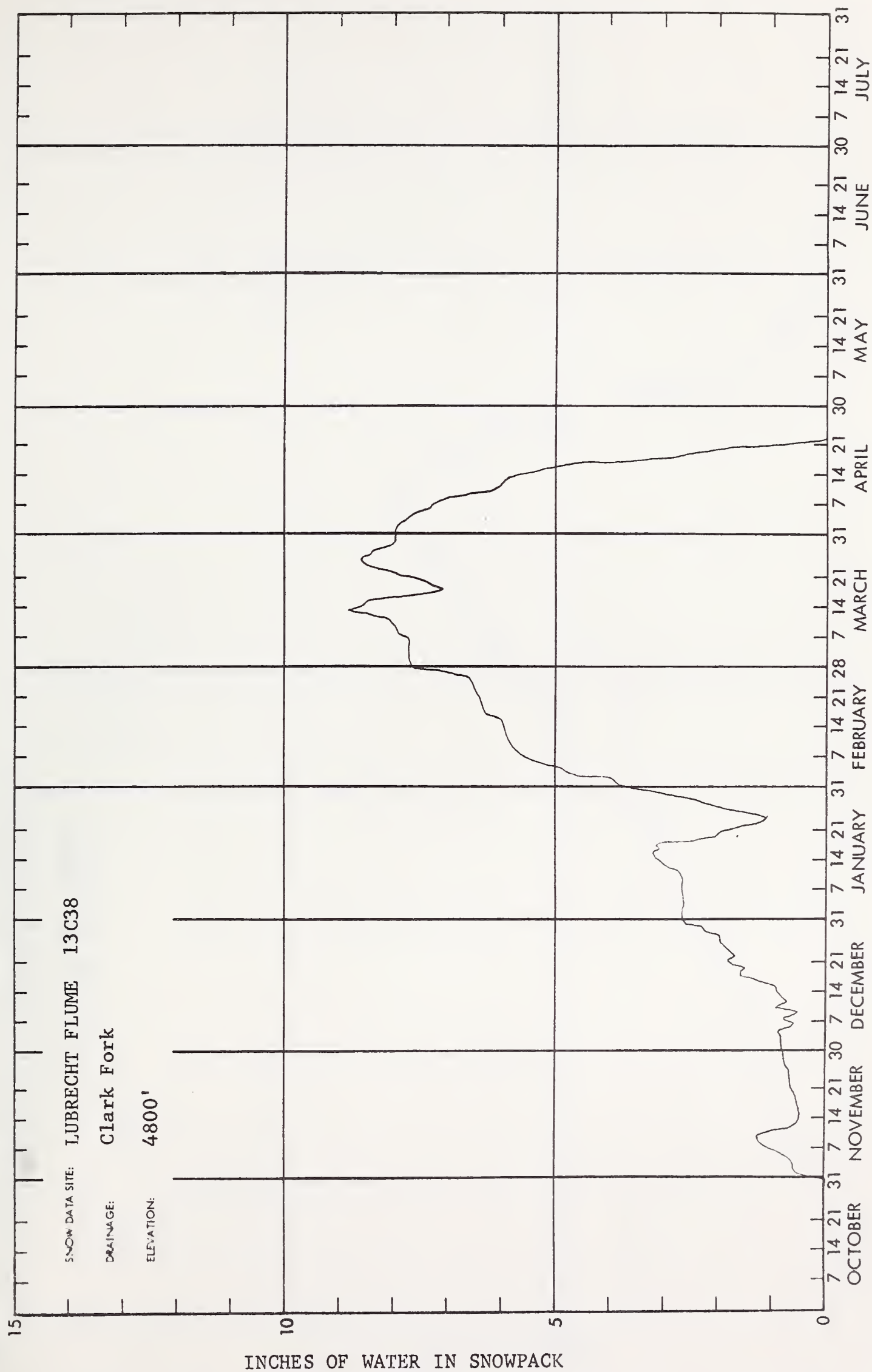
INCHES OF WATER IN SNOWPACK













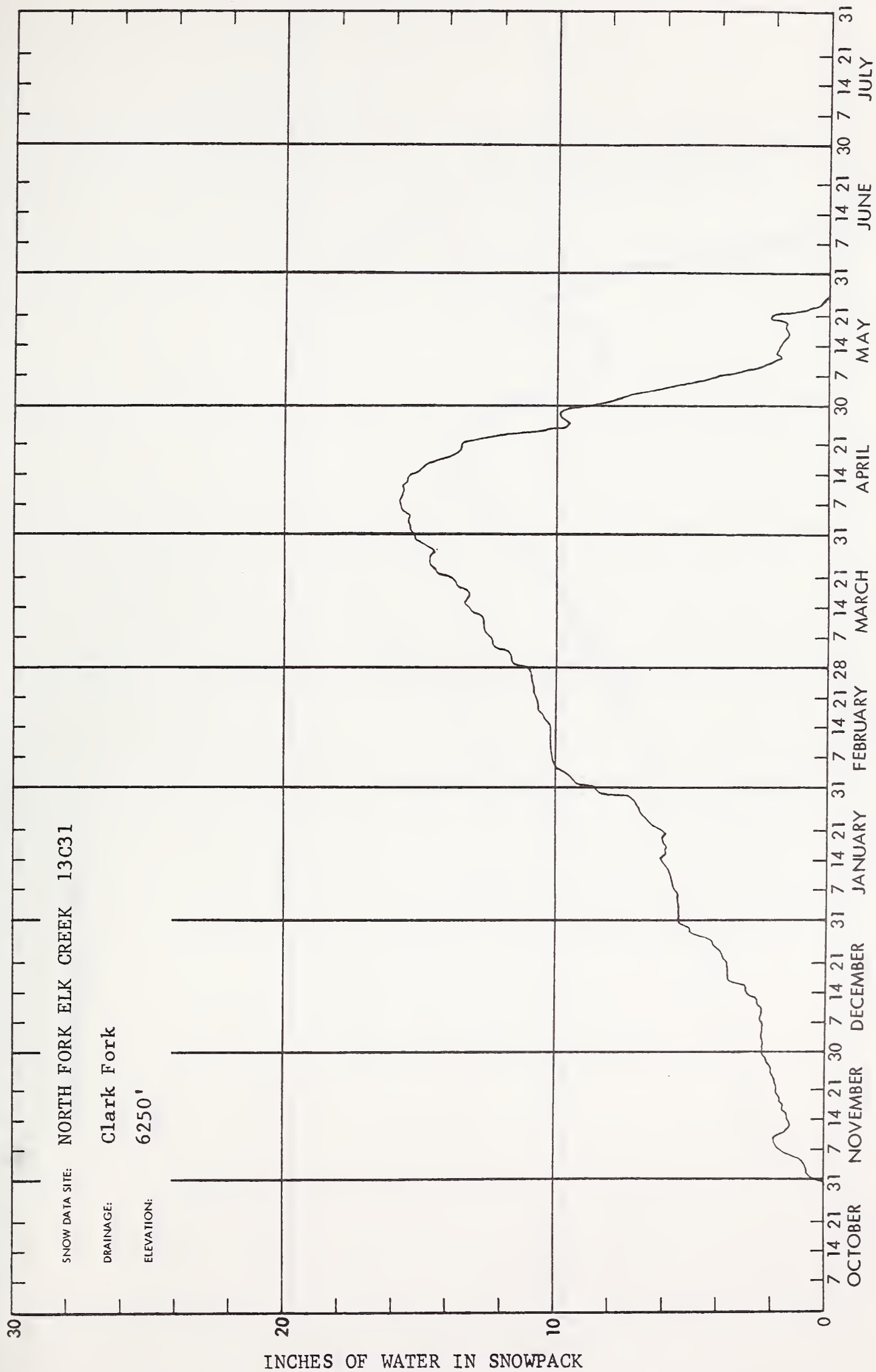
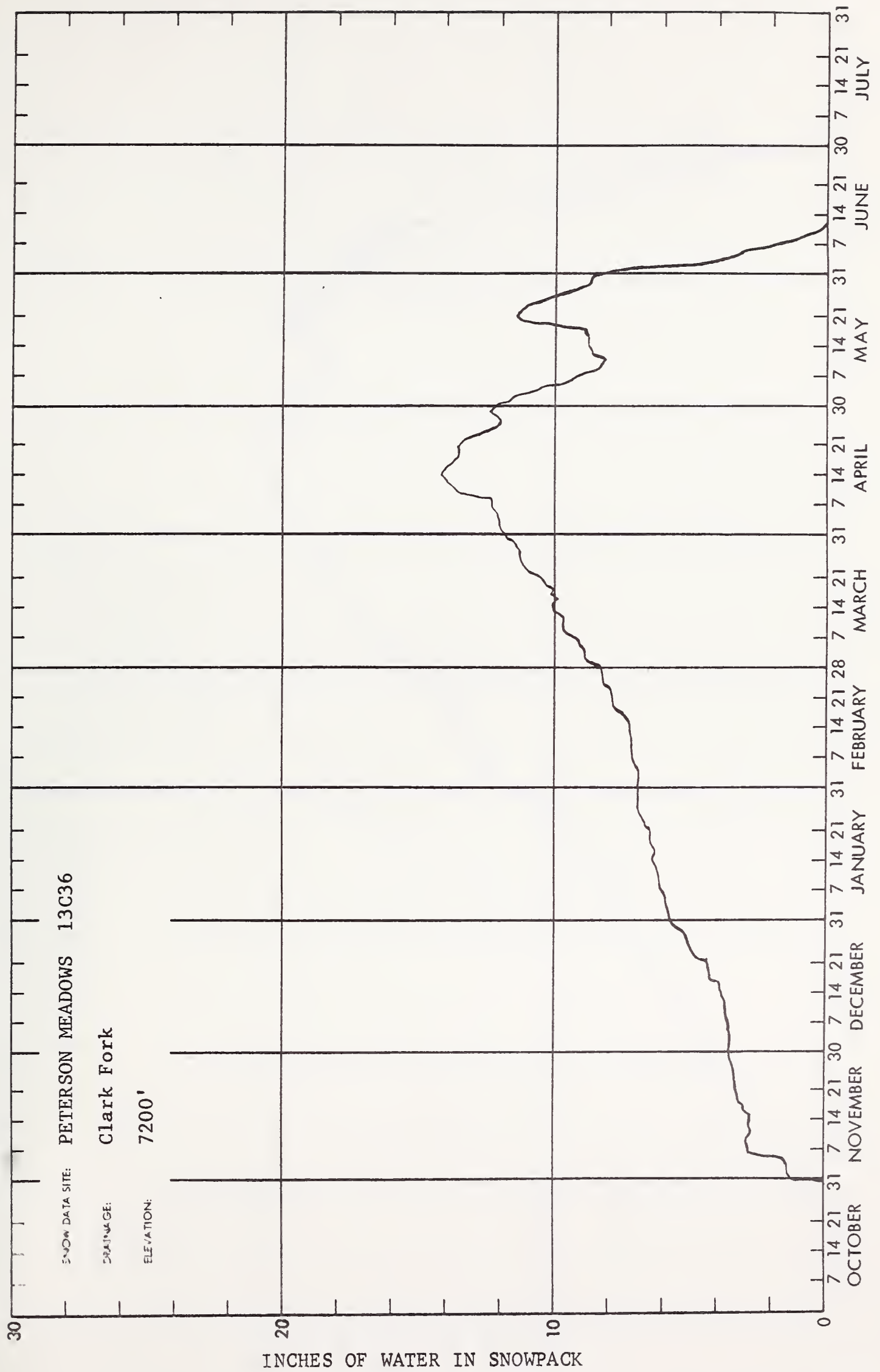




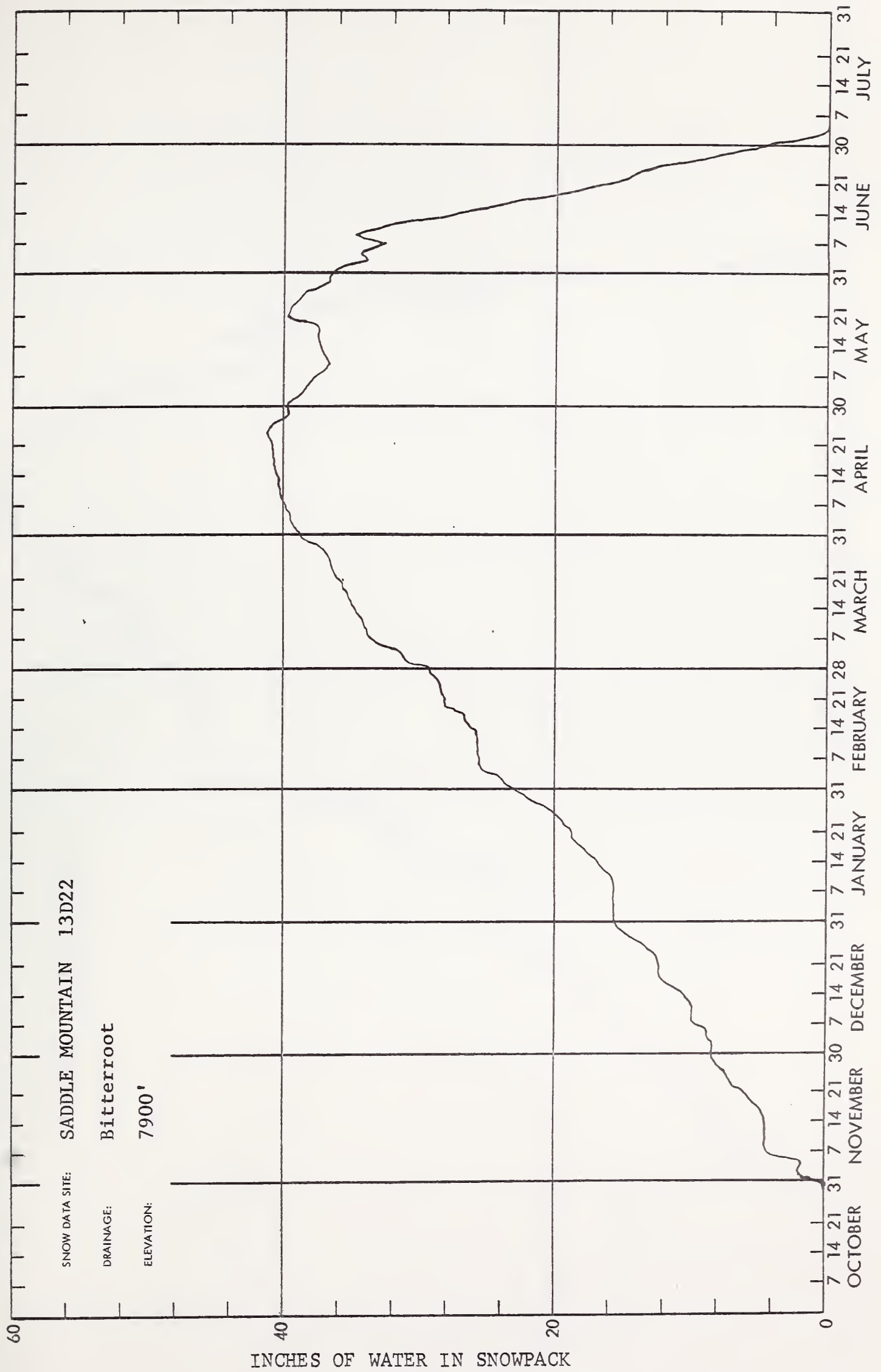


Figure 1: A line graph showing a decreasing trend.



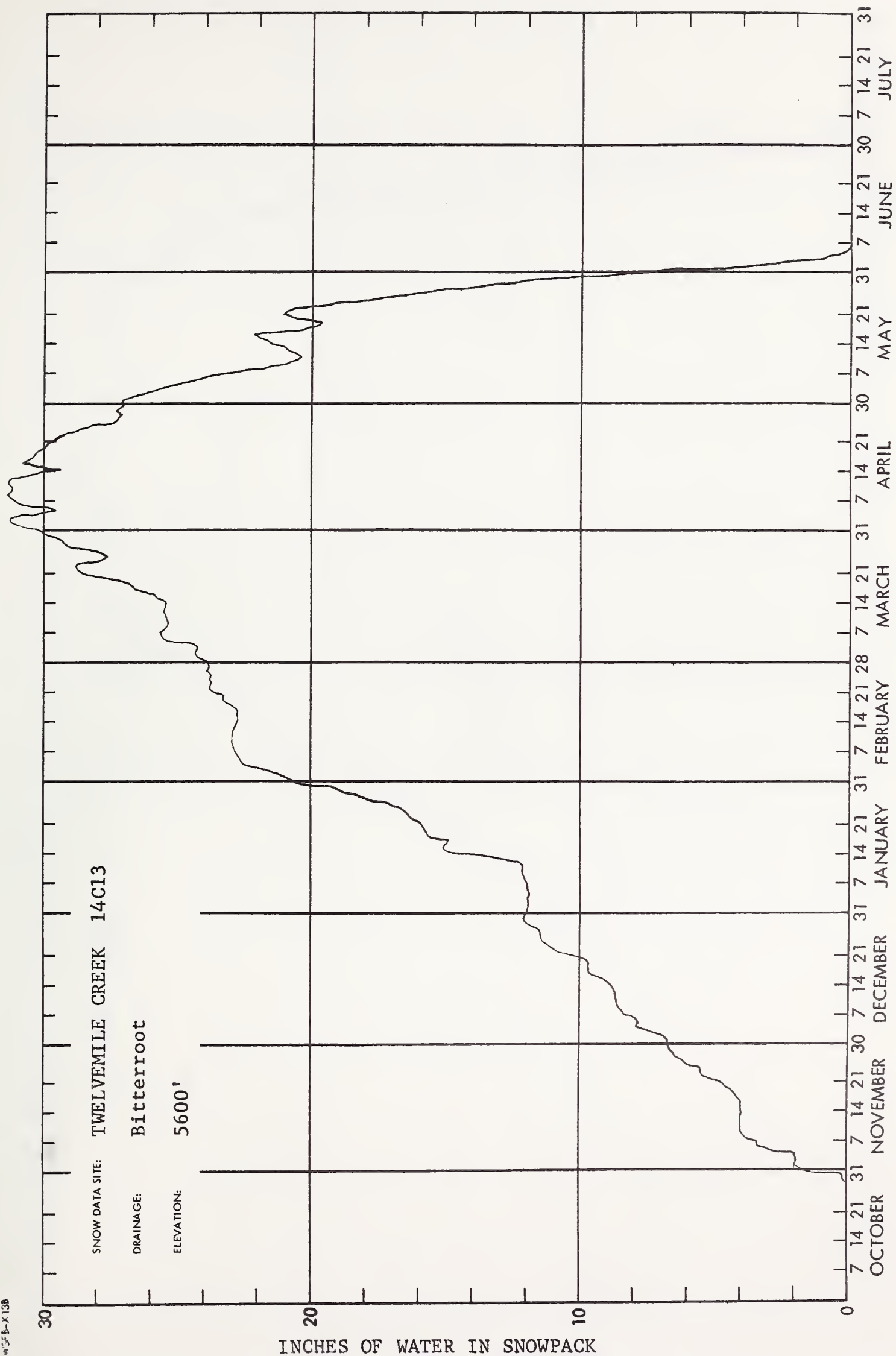


Graph of  $y = 1 - \frac{1}{2}x$  and  $y = \frac{1}{2}x + 1$

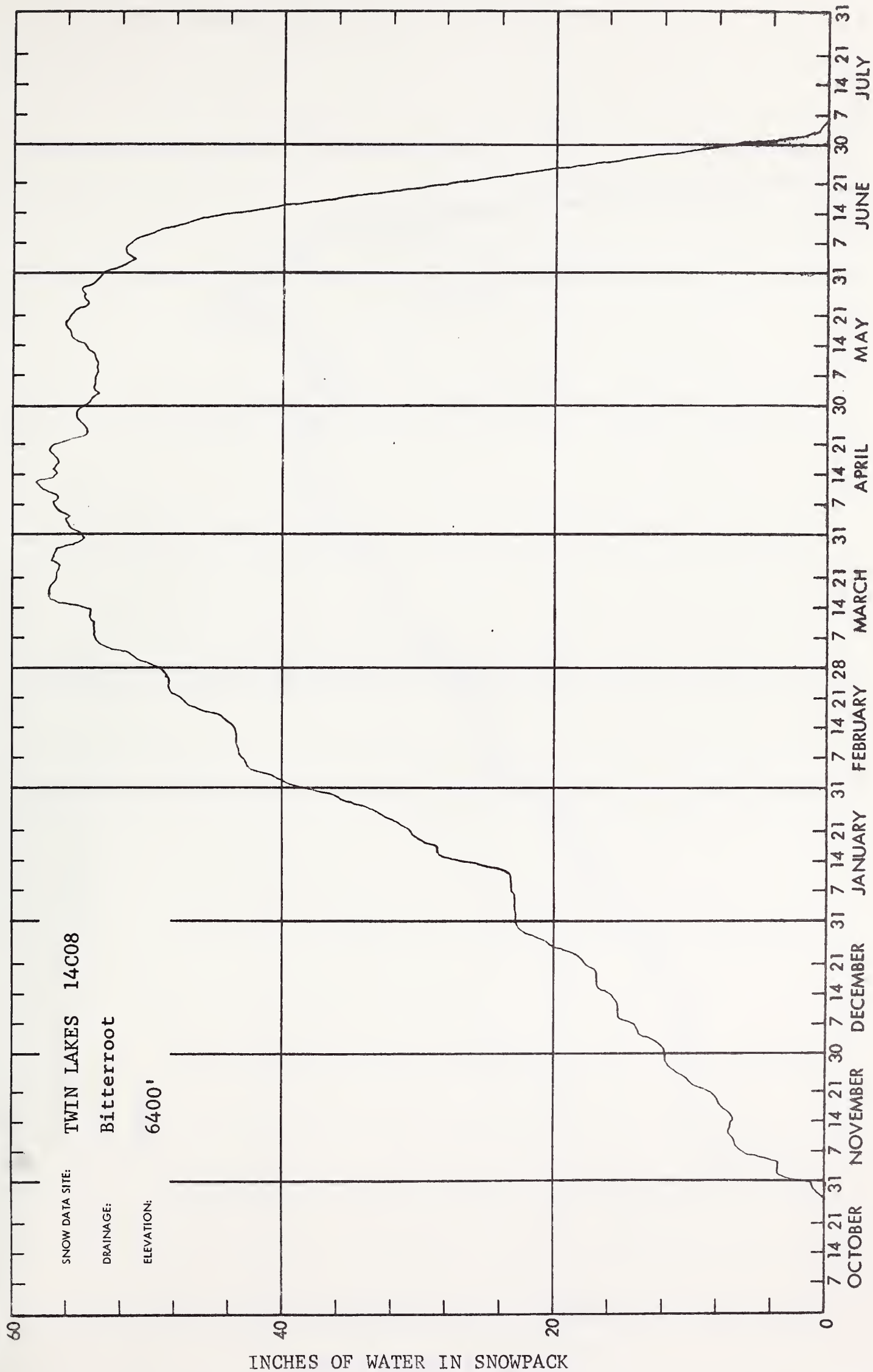








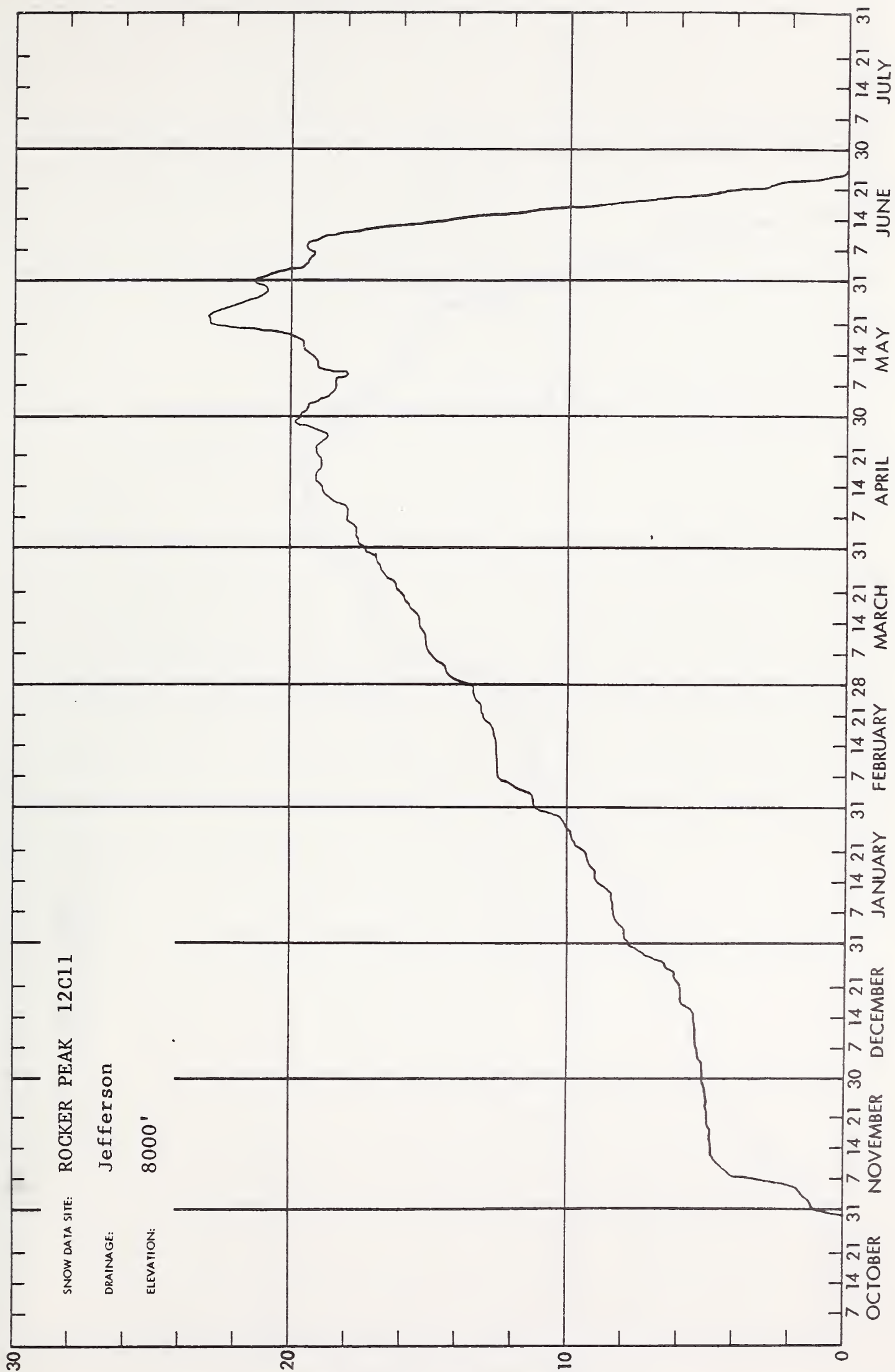




INCHES OF WATER IN SNOWPACK







INCHES OF WATER IN SNOWPACK



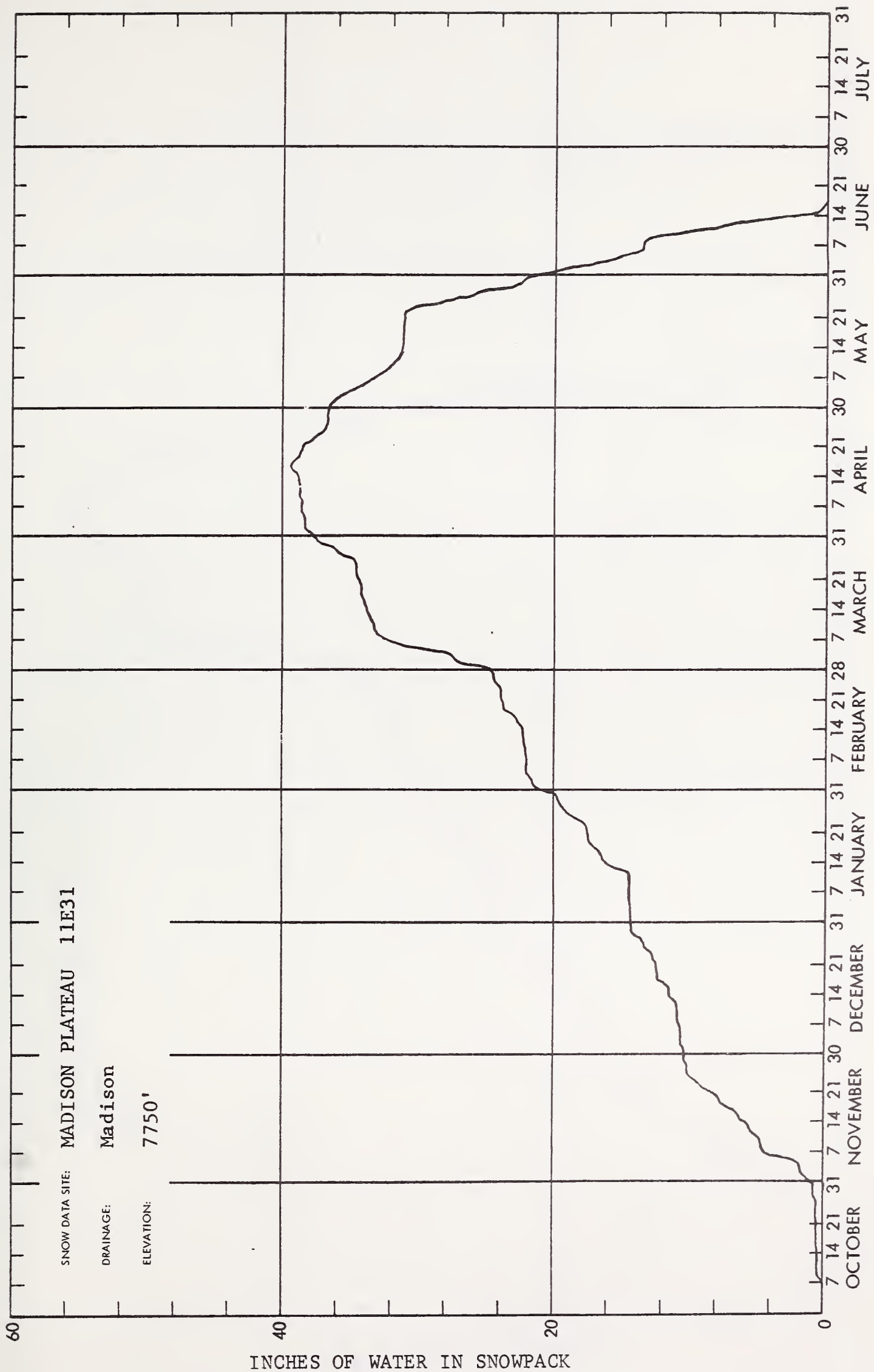
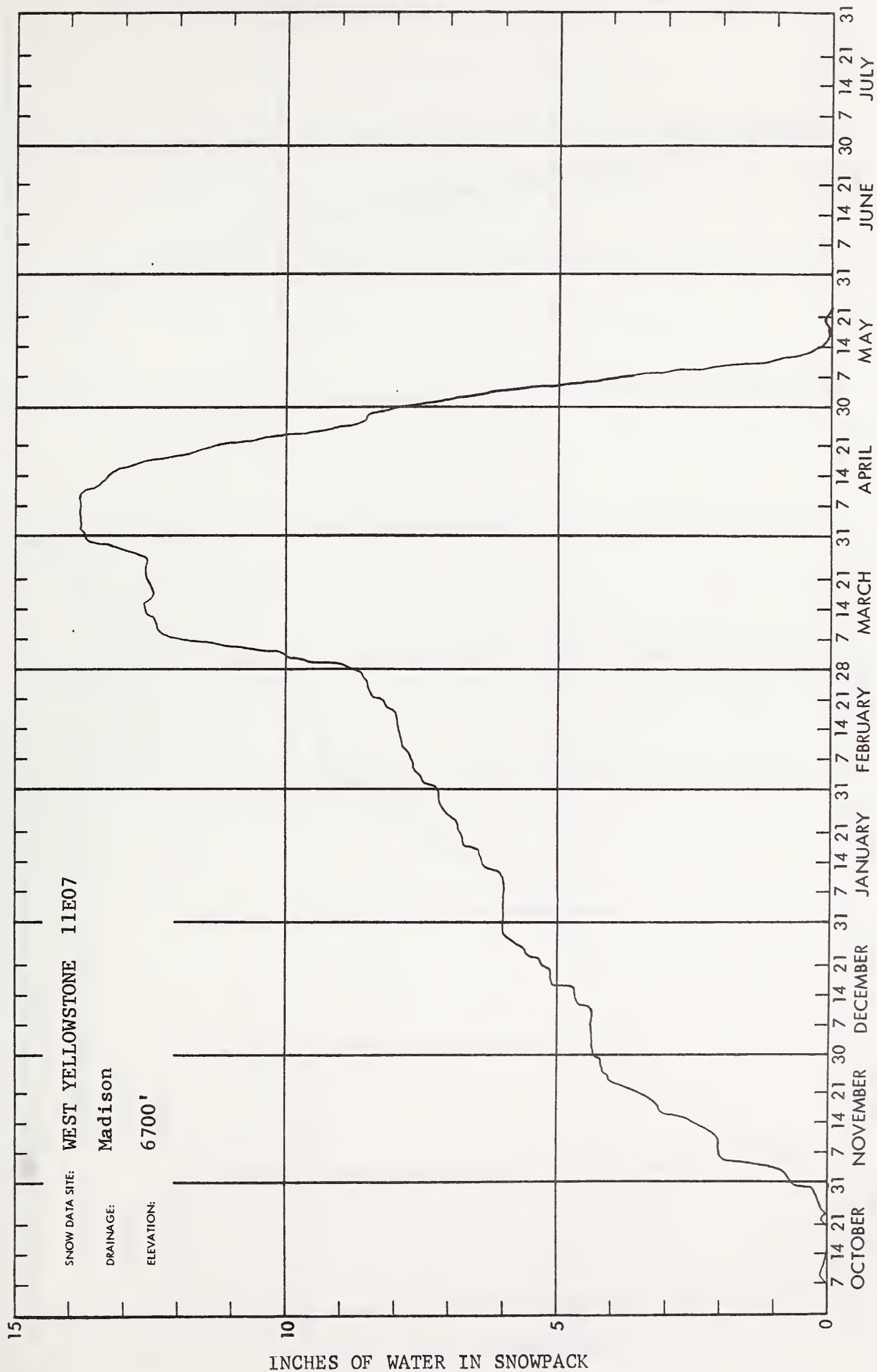




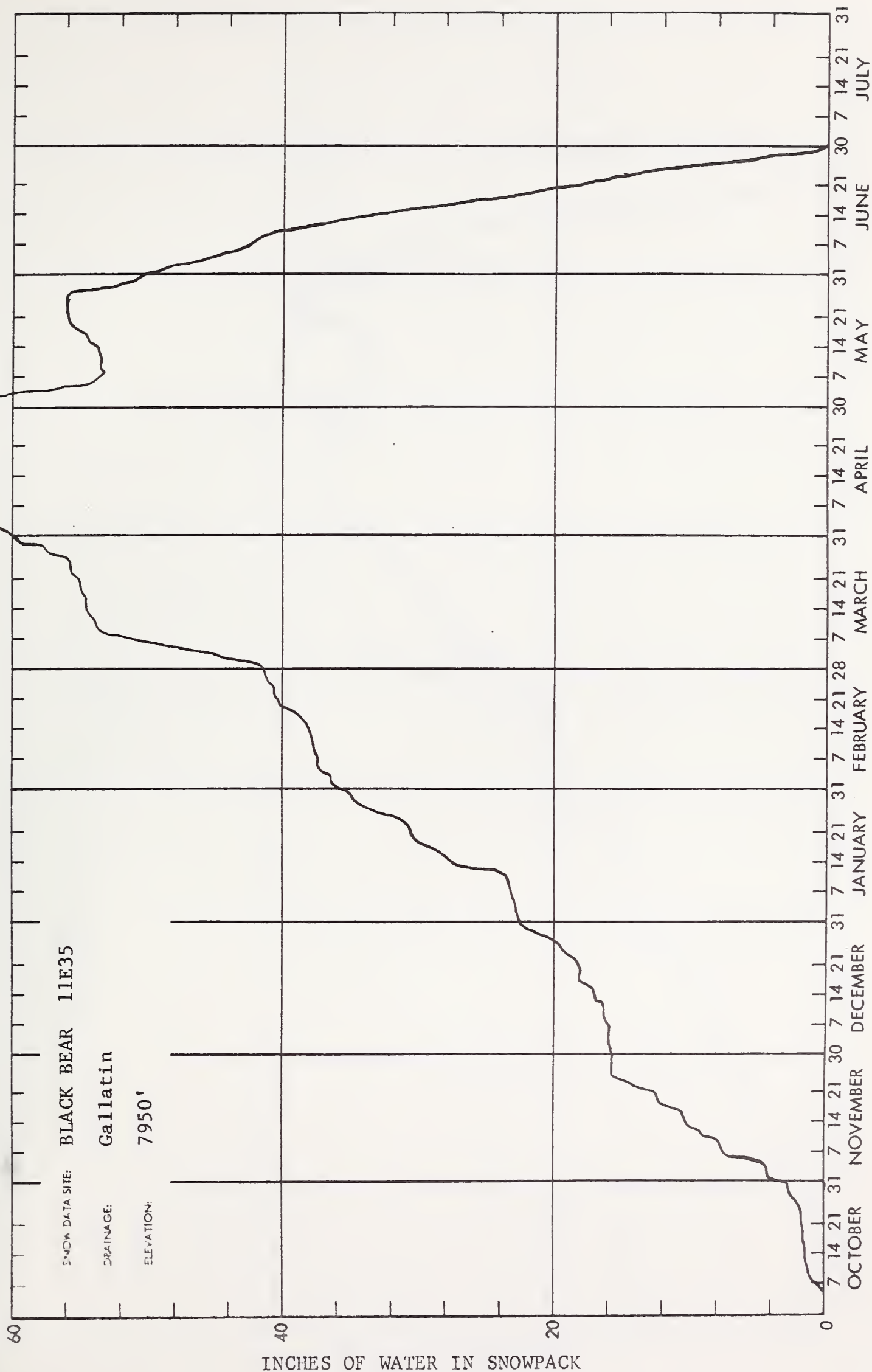
Figure 1: Temperature vs. Time





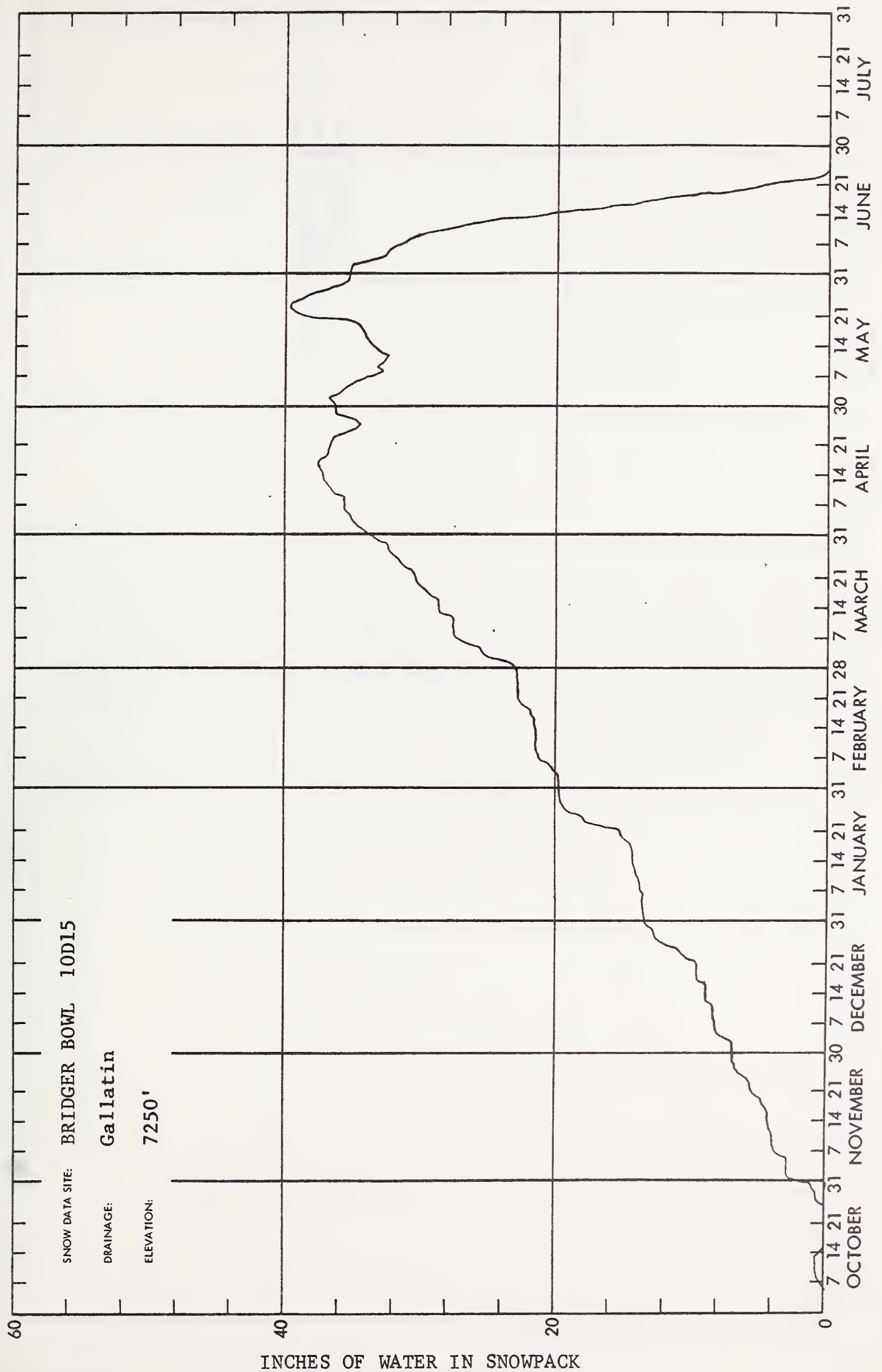
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INCHES OF WATER IN SNOWPACK

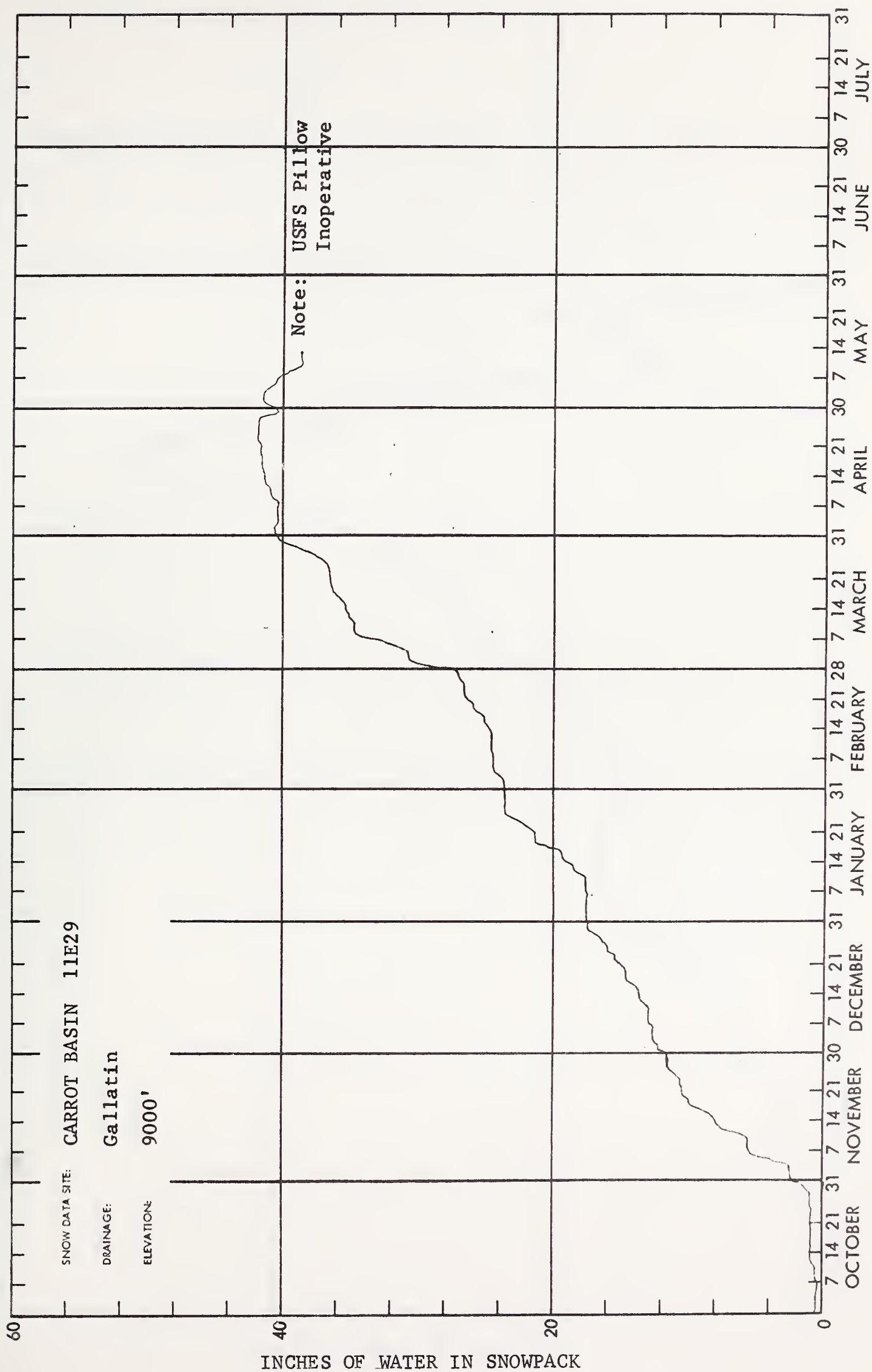




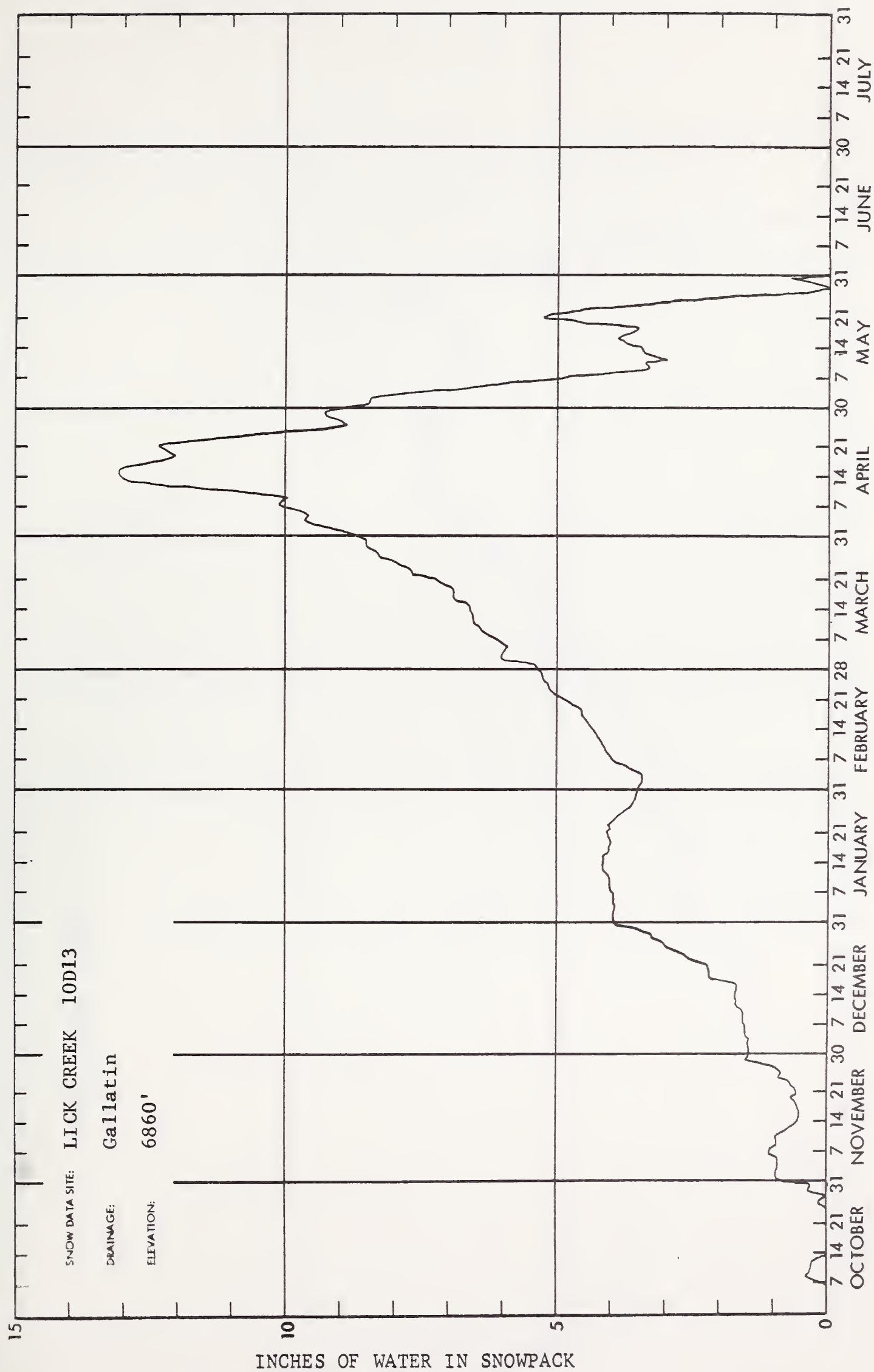


Graph of  $y = \frac{1}{x}$



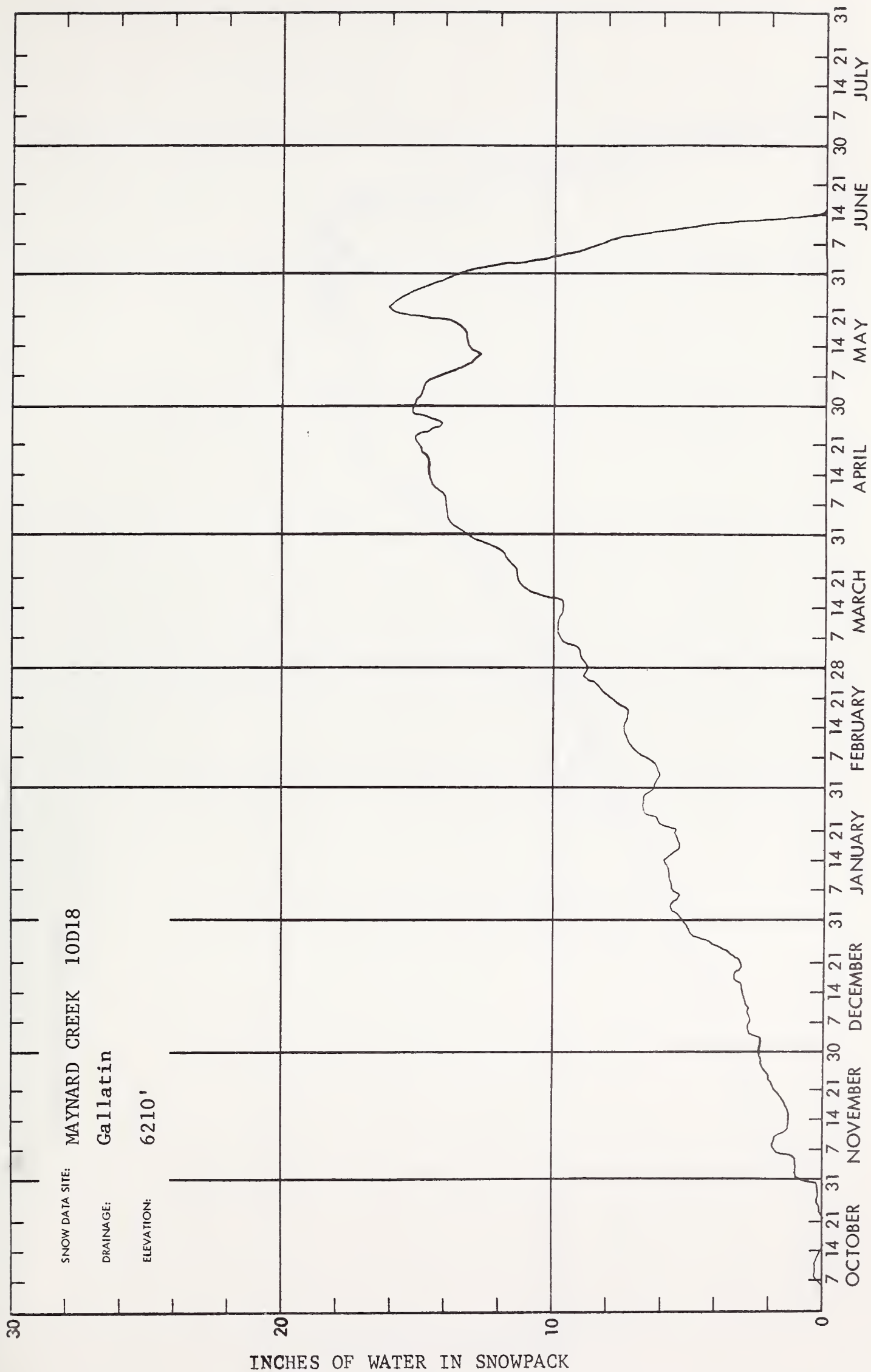






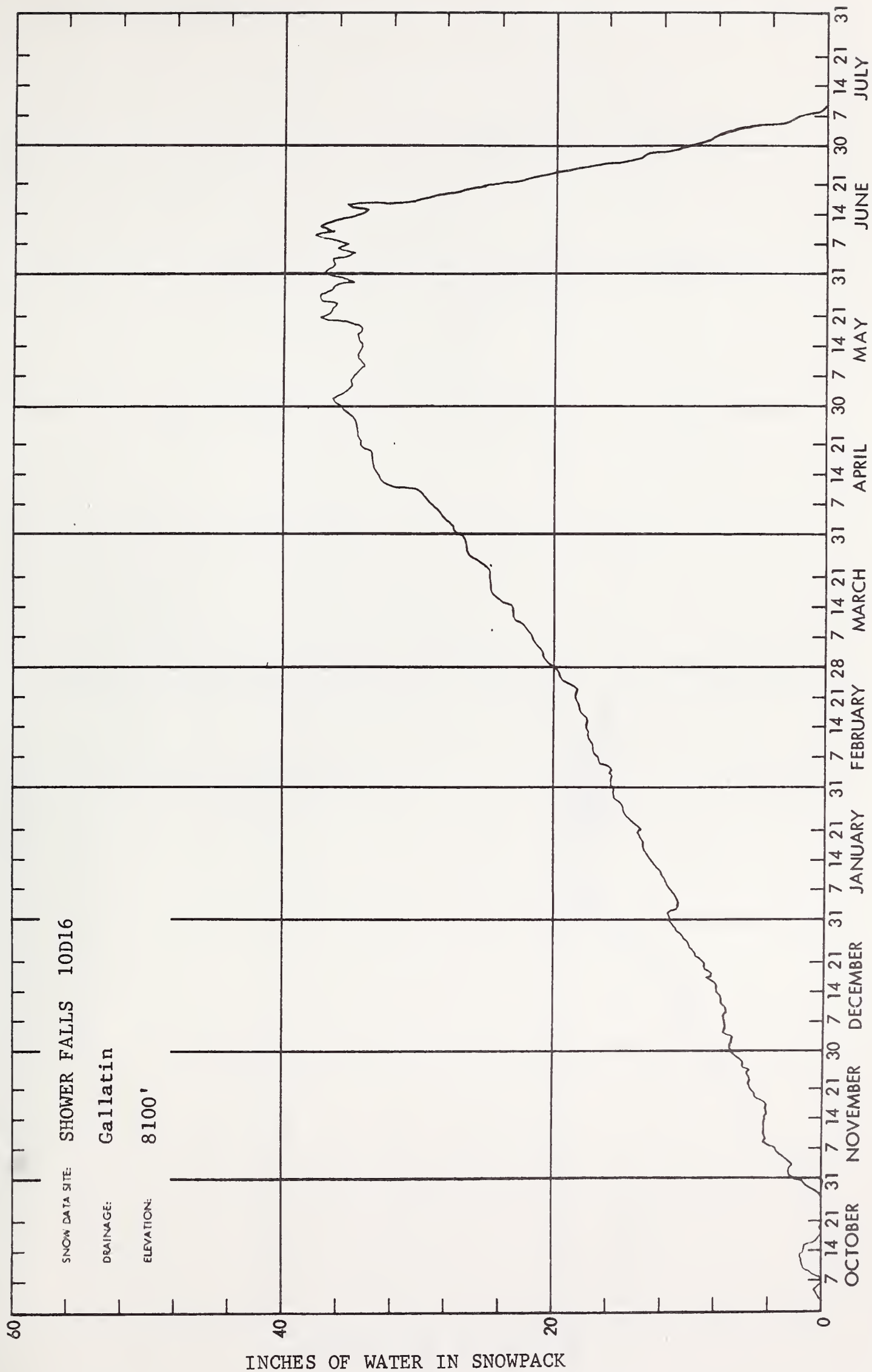


Graph showing Temperature vs. Time





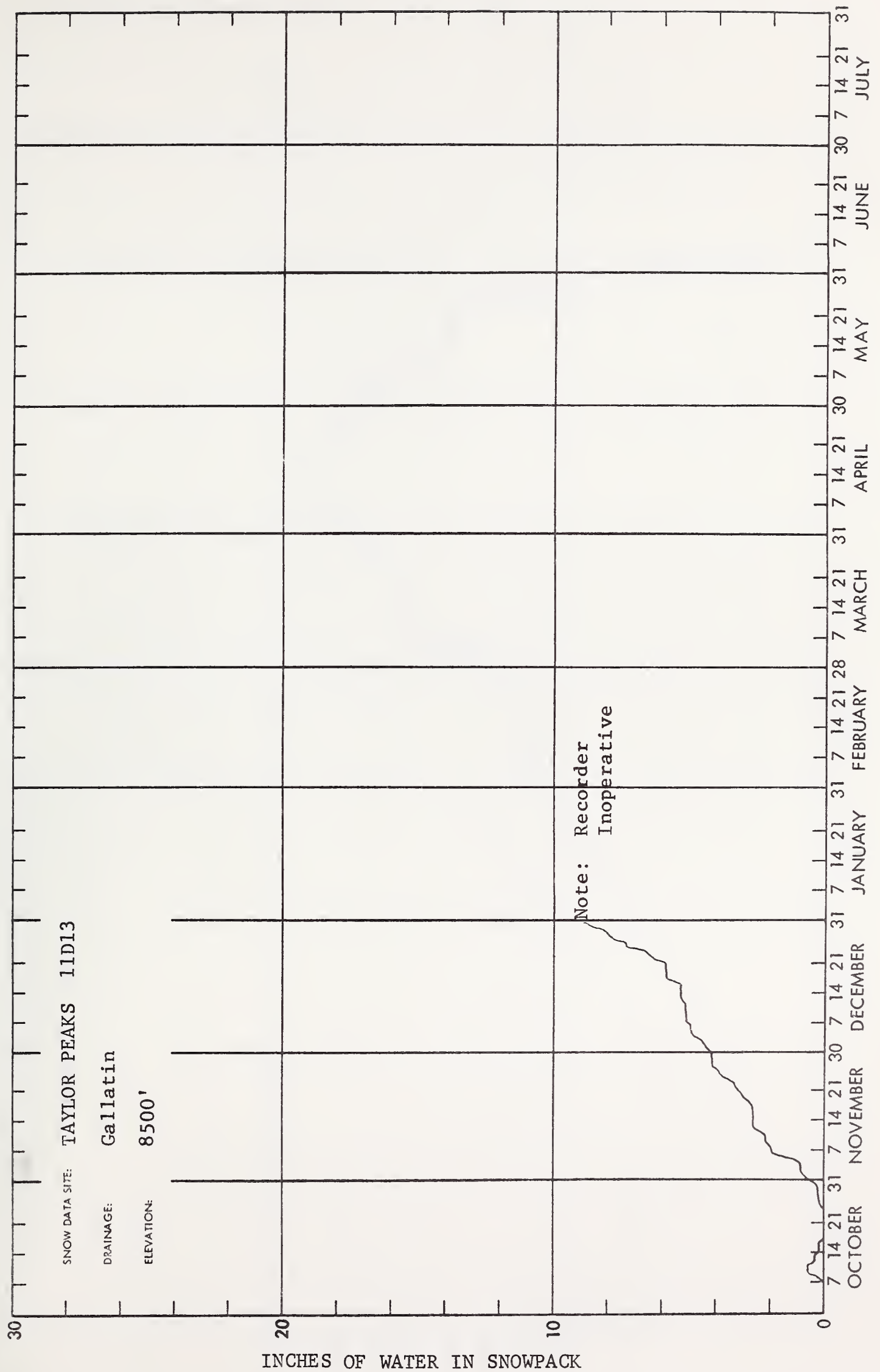




INCHES OF WATER IN SNOWPACK

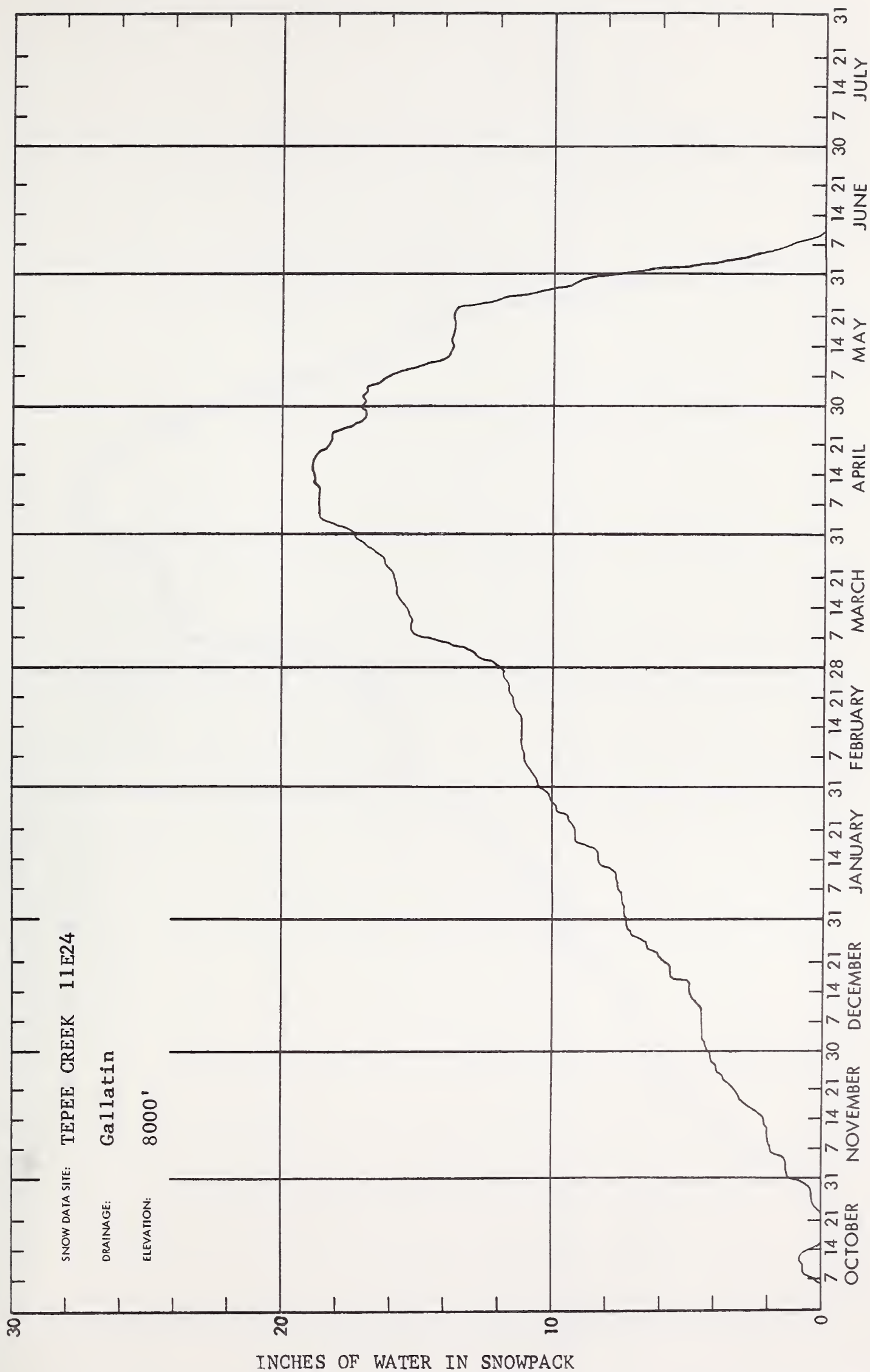


Graph showing the effect of the treatment.

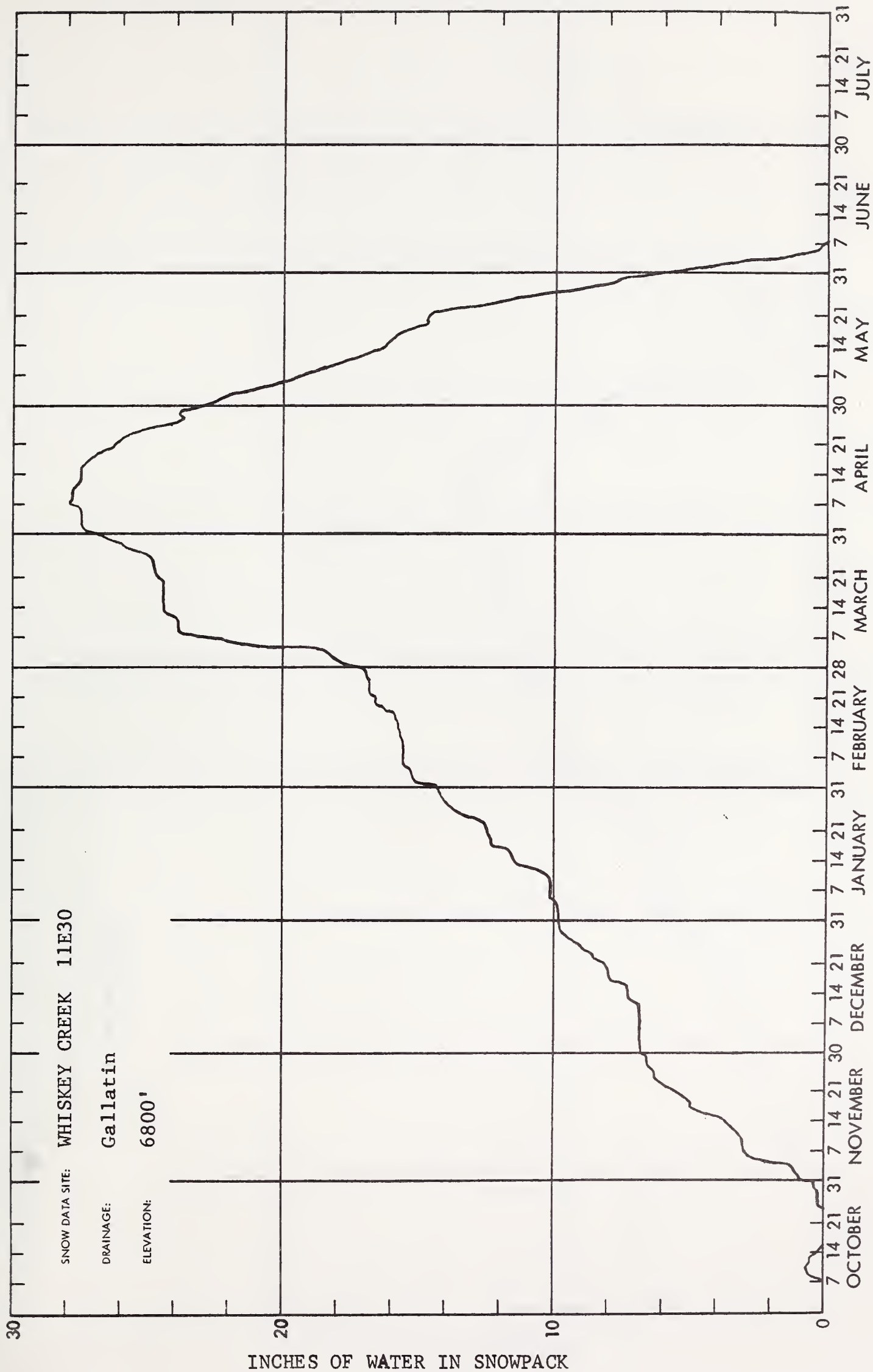






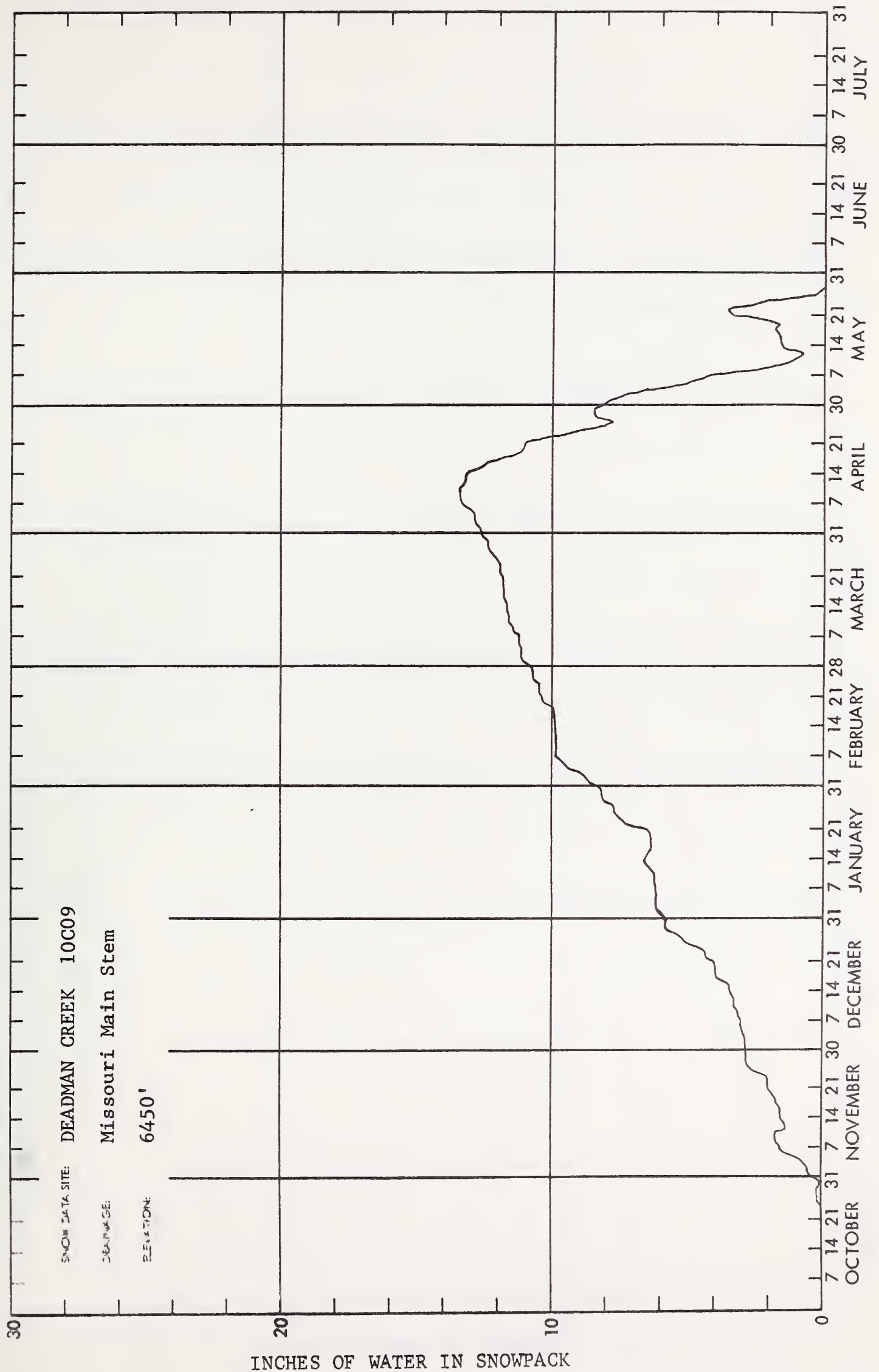






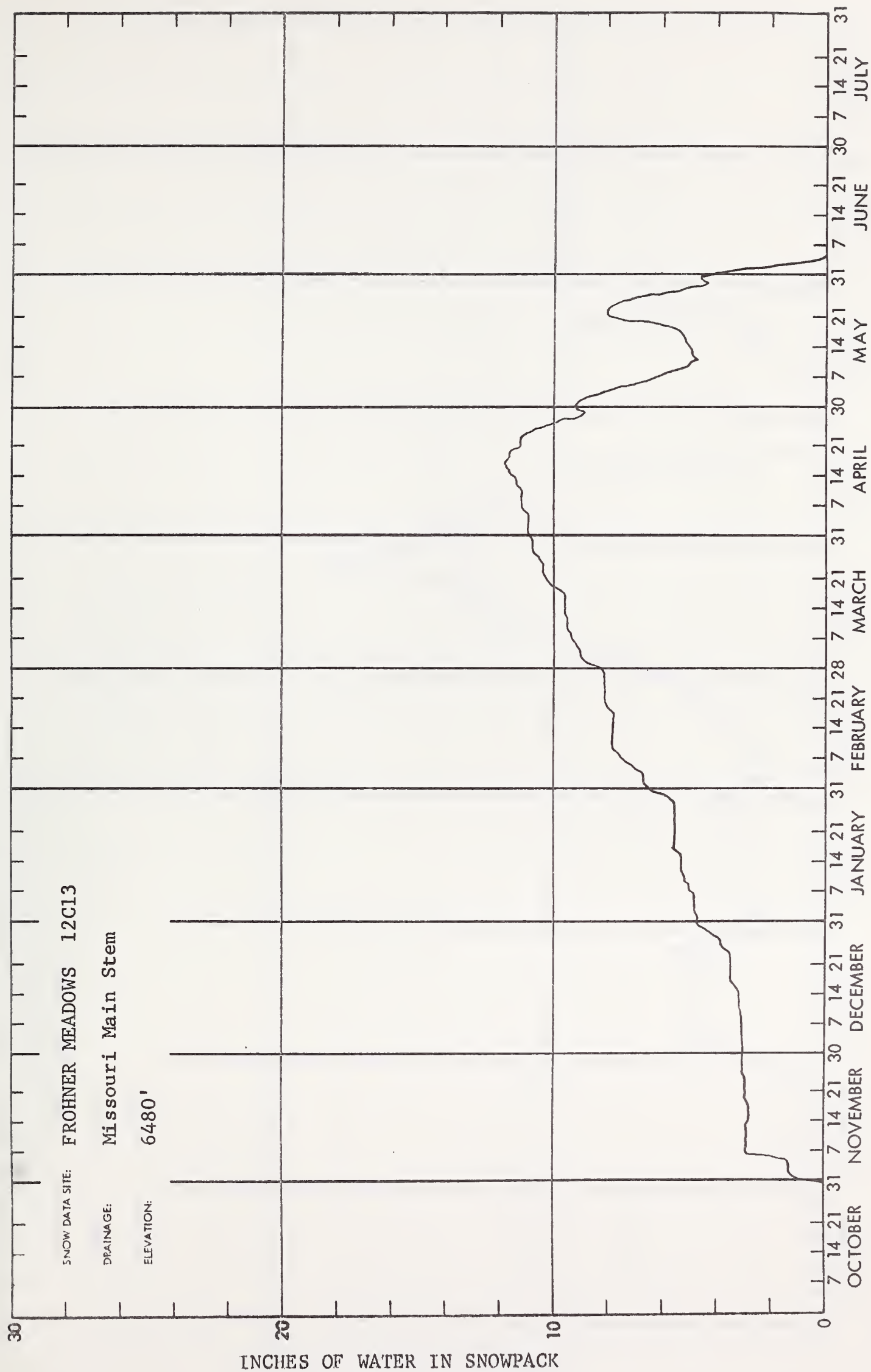


Graph of the function  $y = x^2$  and its inverse  $y = \sqrt{x}$ .

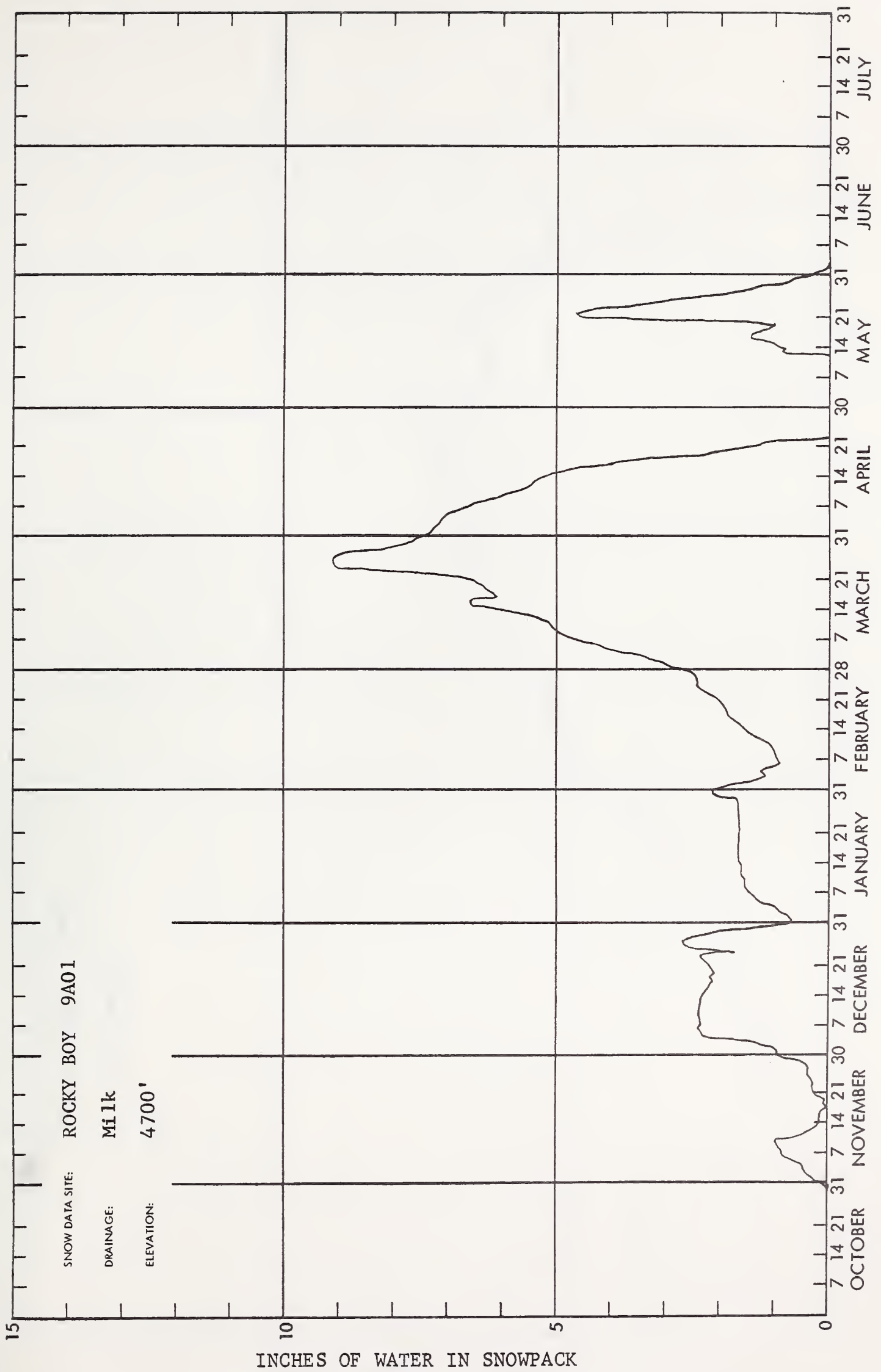












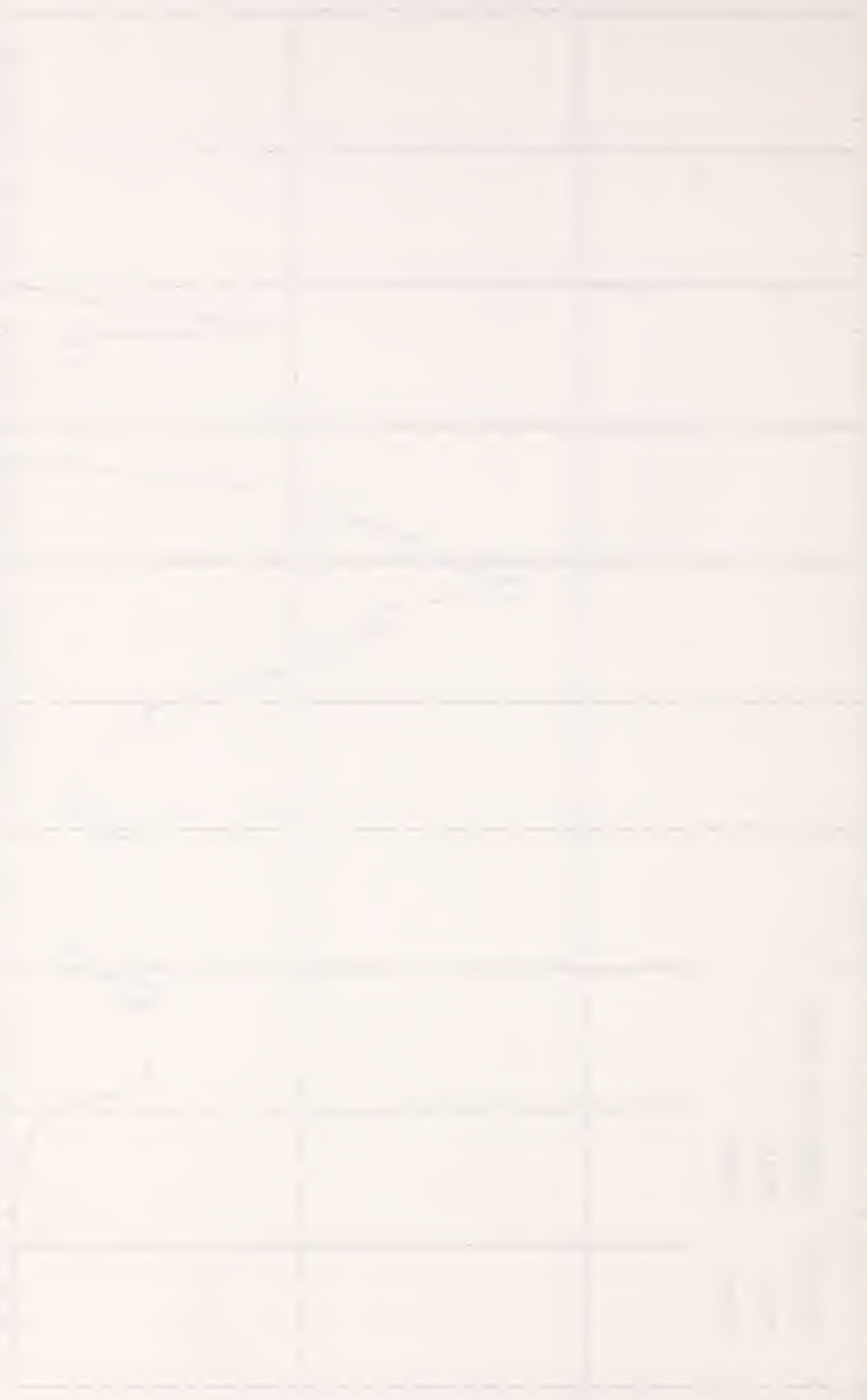
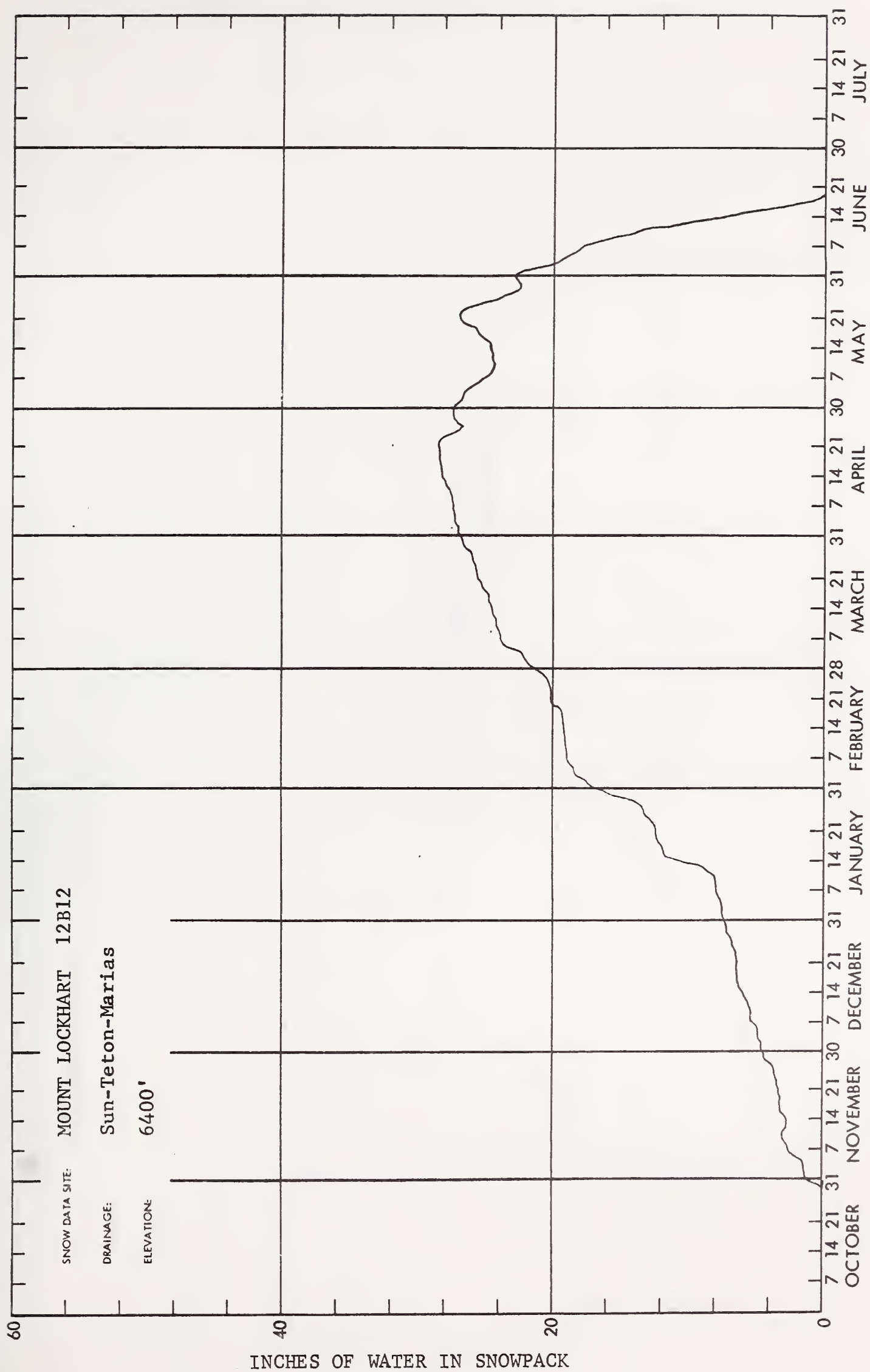
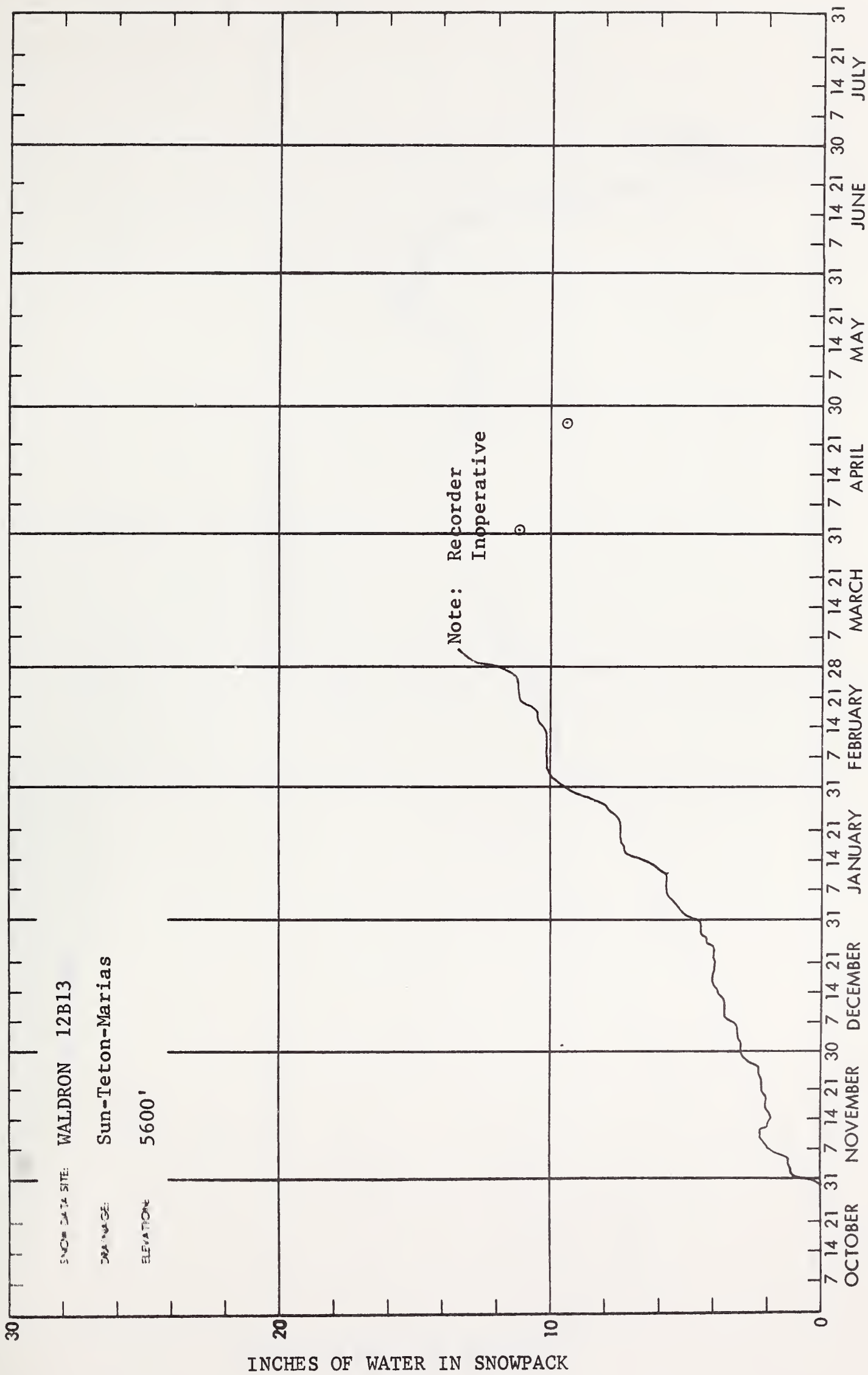


Figure 1: A 4x4 grid of plots showing various data series, likely time series or spatial data, with varying trends and patterns.



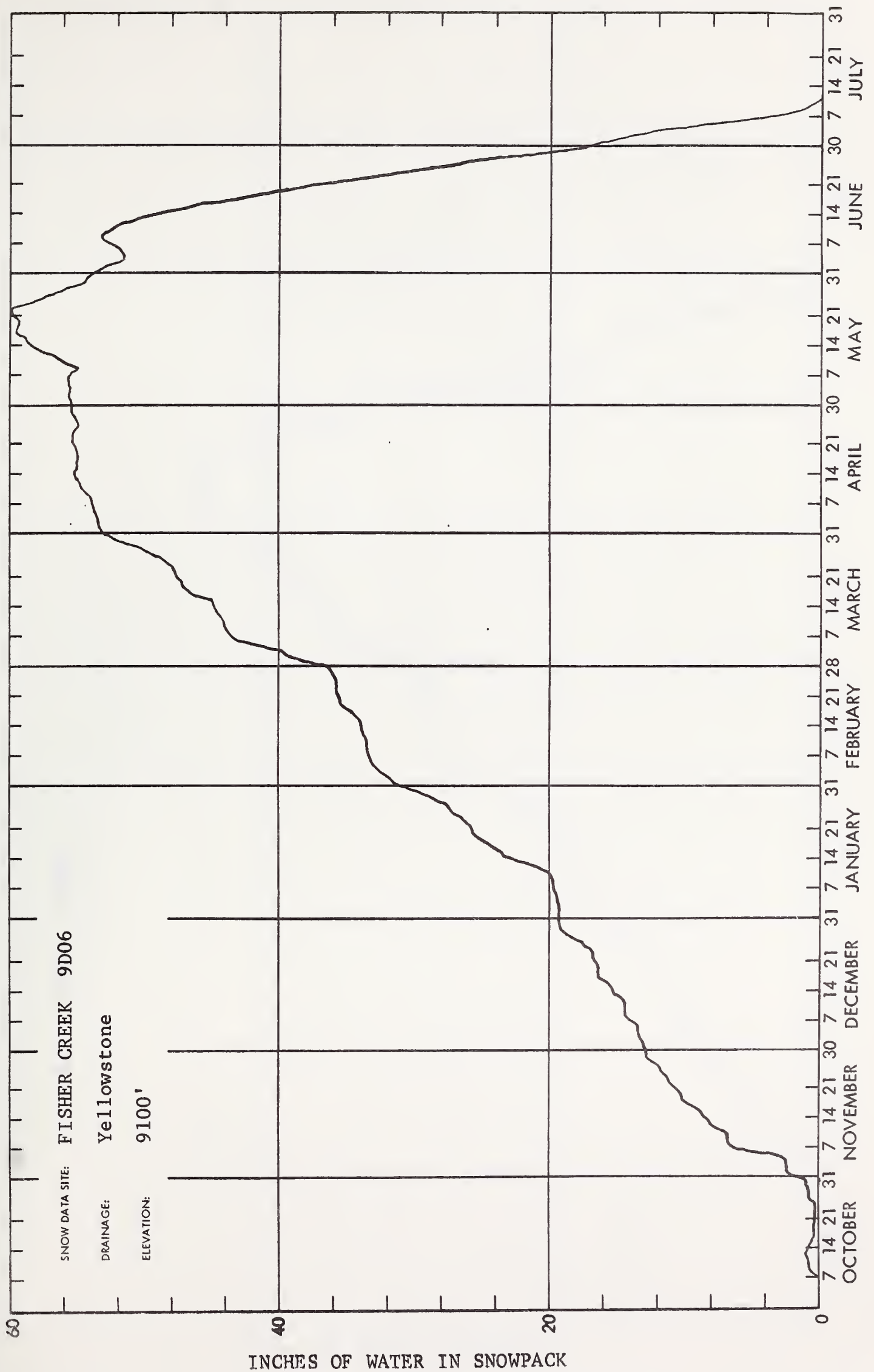






INCHES OF WATER IN SNOWPACK

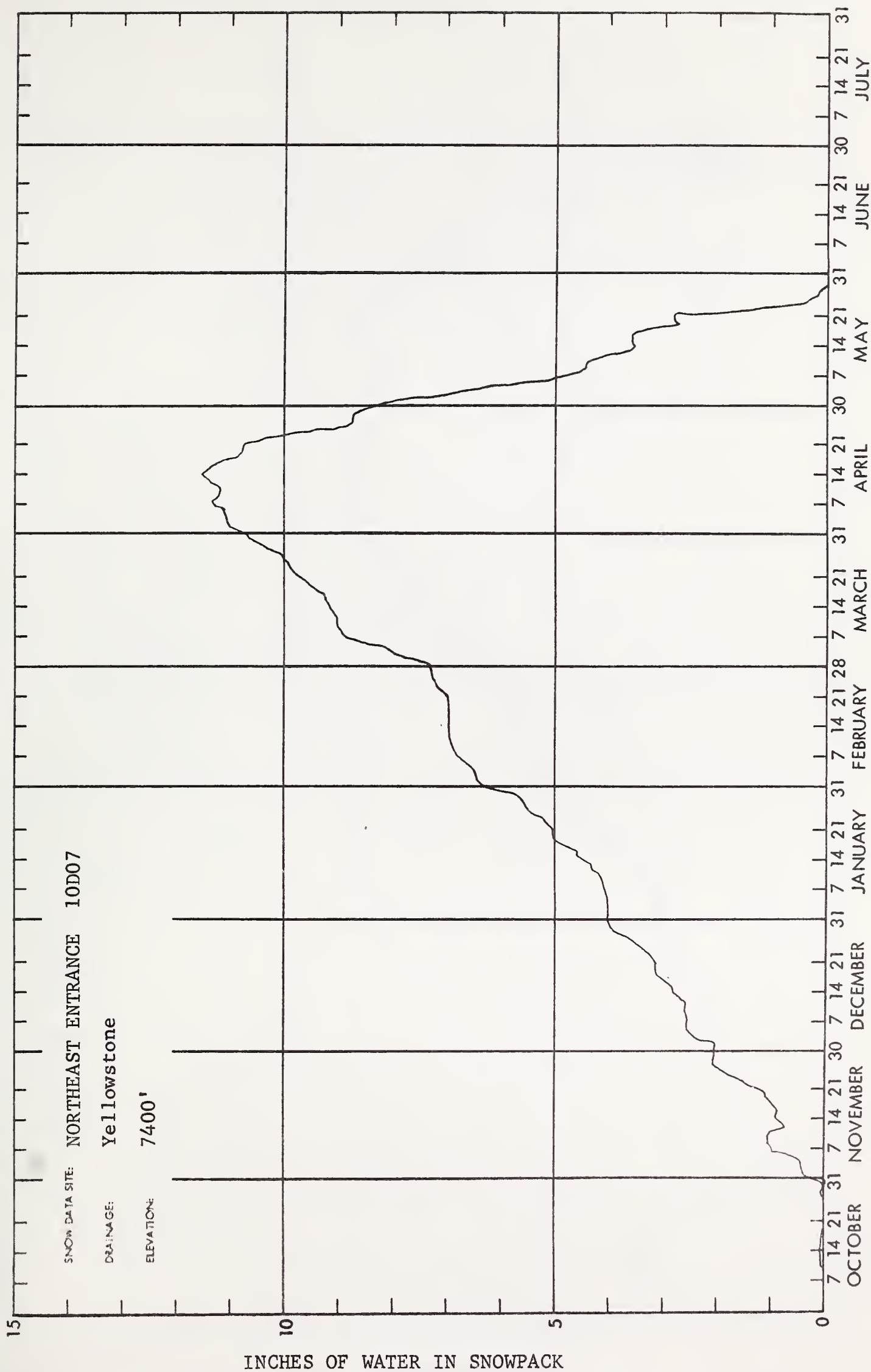








Graph showing the relationship between x and y.



INCHES OF WATER IN SNOWPACK



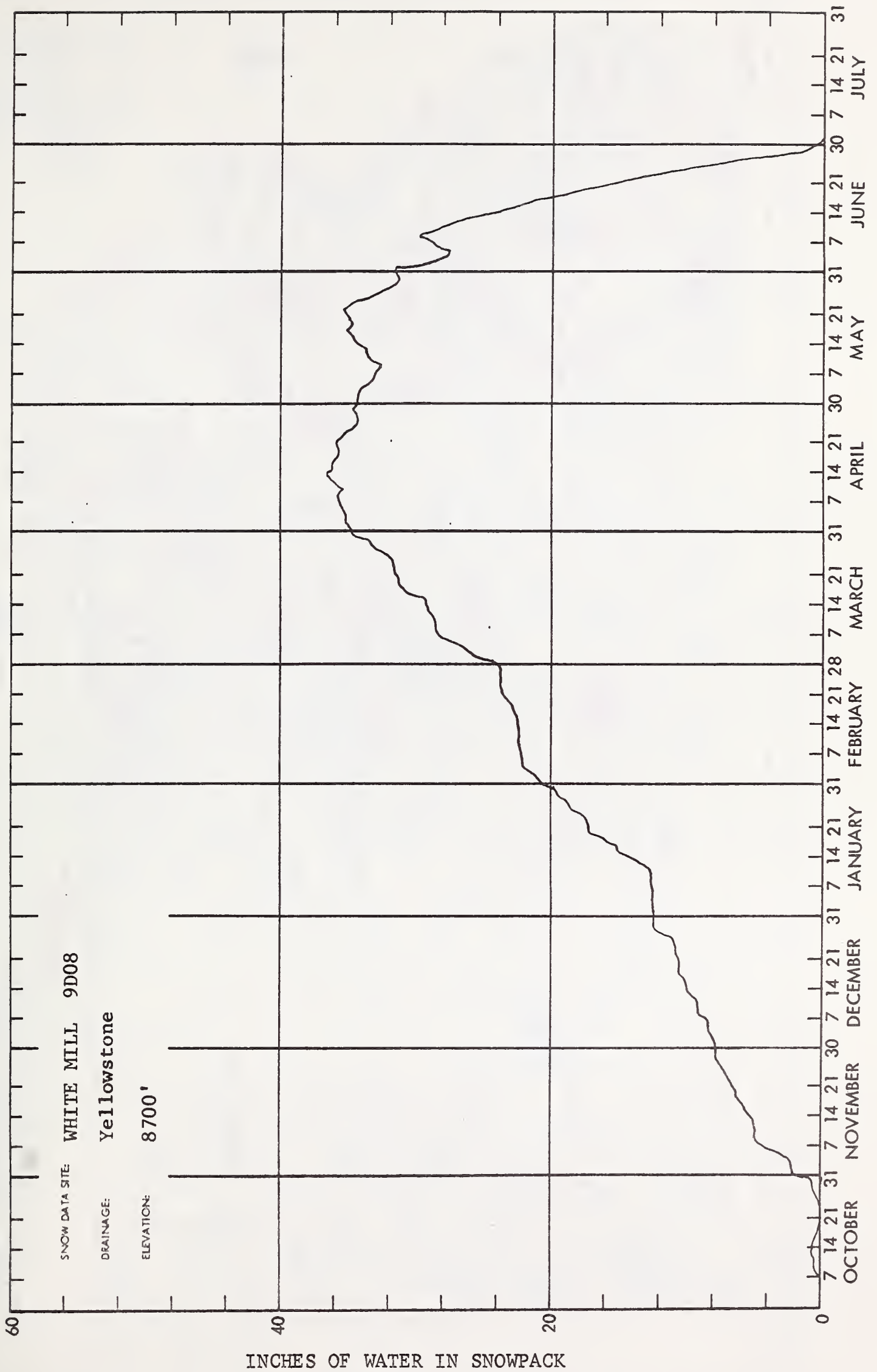
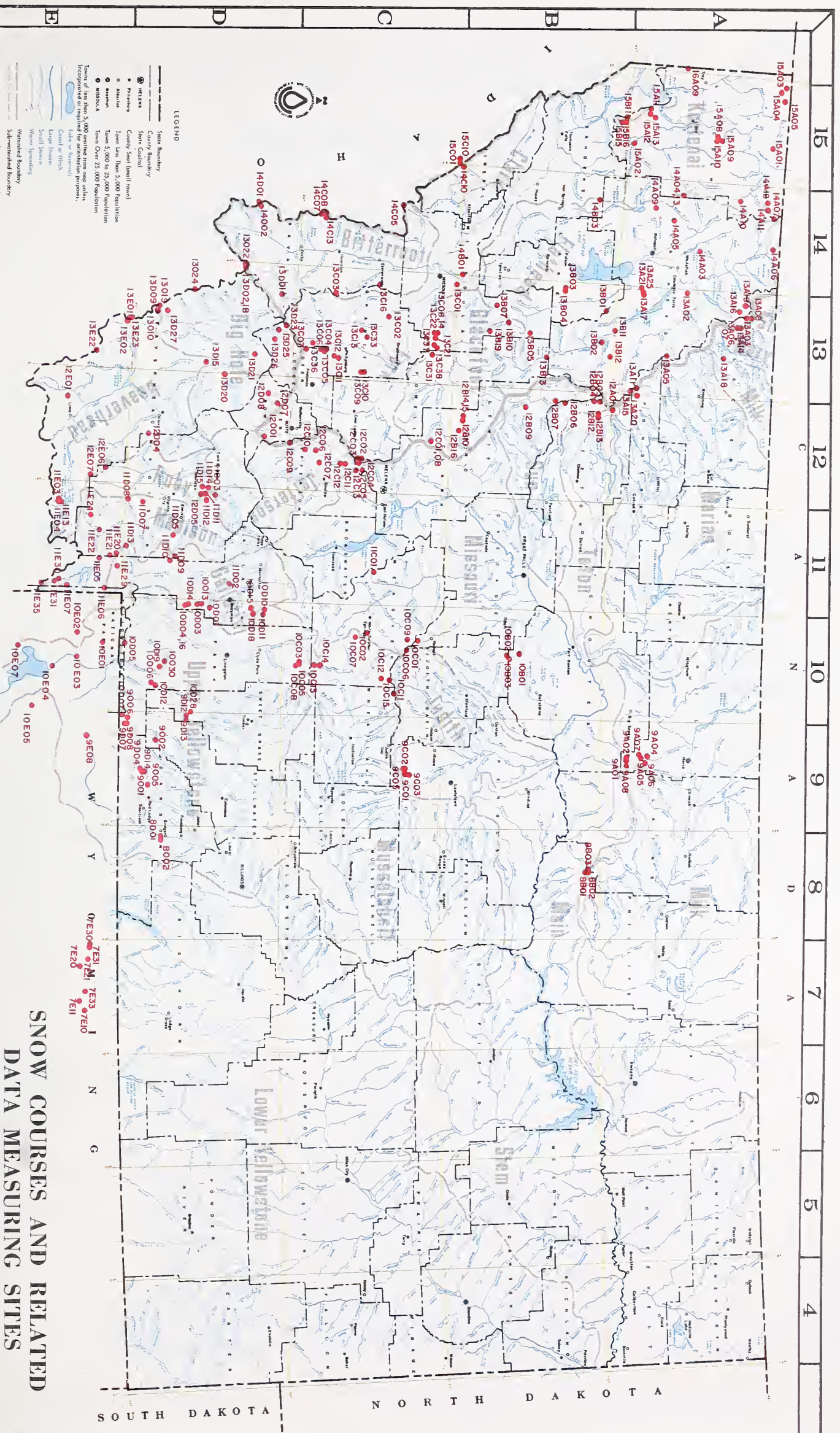




Figure 1: A line graph showing a fluctuating trend over time.





SNOW COURSES AND RELATED  
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# Agencies and Organizations Cooperating in Montana Snow Surveys

## GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

### Canada:

Water Survey of Canada, Calgary, Department of the  
Environment  
Water Resources Service, Department of Lands, Forests  
and Water Resources, British Columbia

### Federal:

Department of the Army  
Corps of Engineers  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Forest Service  
Soil Conservation Service  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
NOAA, National Weather Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bonneville Power Administration  
Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Bureau of Sports Fisheries and Wildlife  
Geological Survey  
National Park Service

## STATE

Montana Association of Conservation Districts  
Montana Department of Fish and Game  
Montana Department of Natural Resources and  
Conservation  
Montana Water Resources Board  
Montana State University - Agricultural Experiment  
Station  
North Montana Branch Station - Agricultural Exper-  
iment Station  
University of Montana - School of Forestry

## PRIVATE

Montana Power Company

Other organizations and individuals furnish valuable  
information for snow survey reports. Their cooperation  
is gratefully acknowledged.



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